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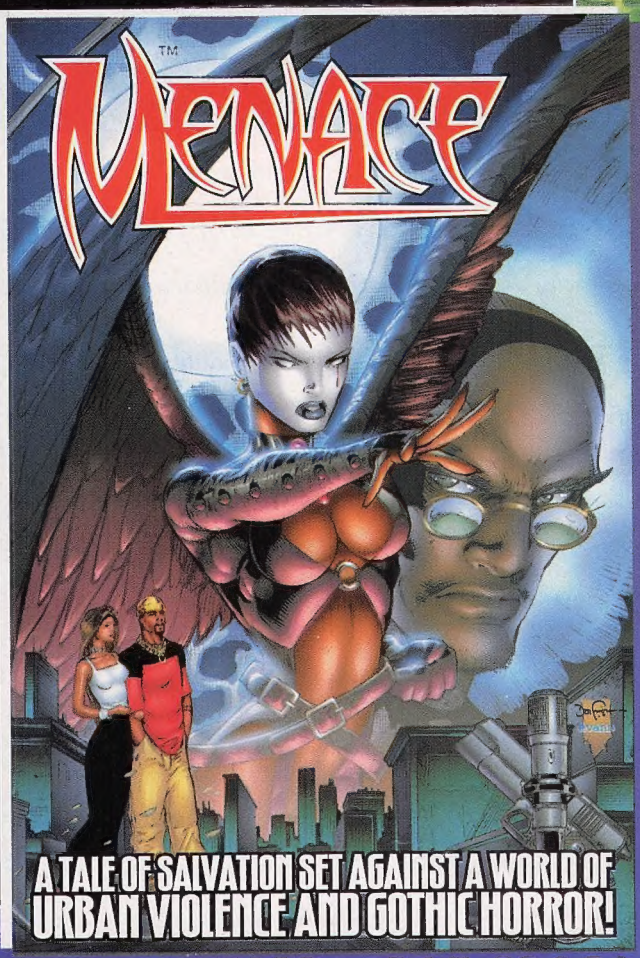

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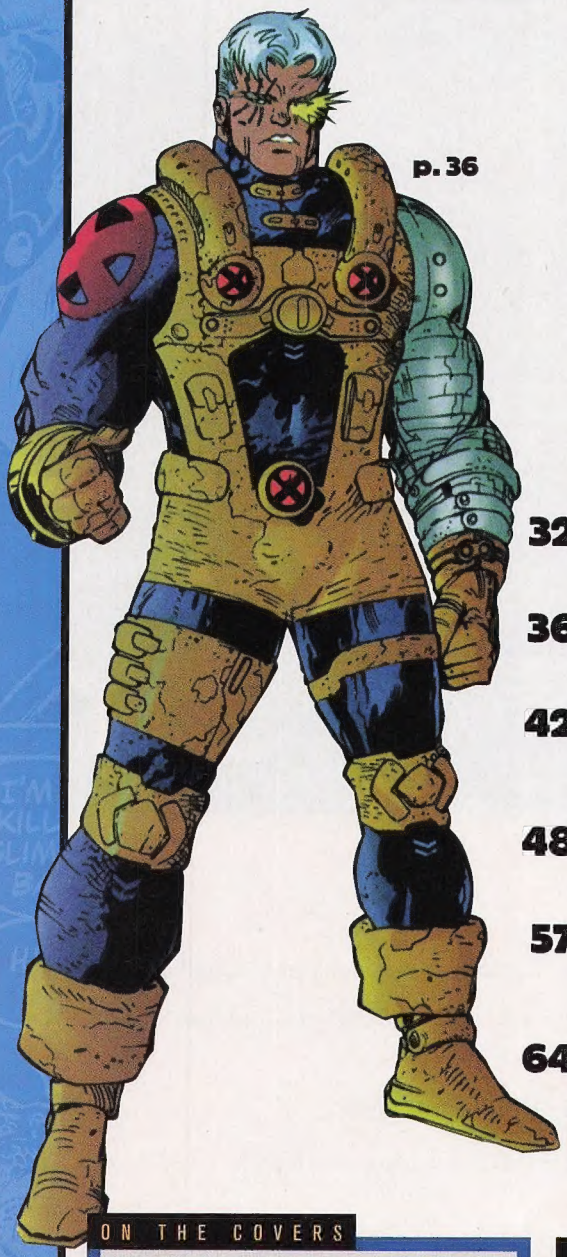

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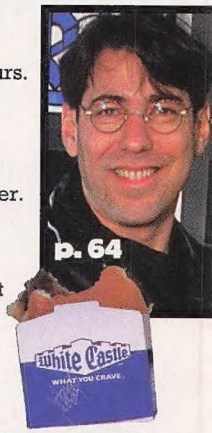
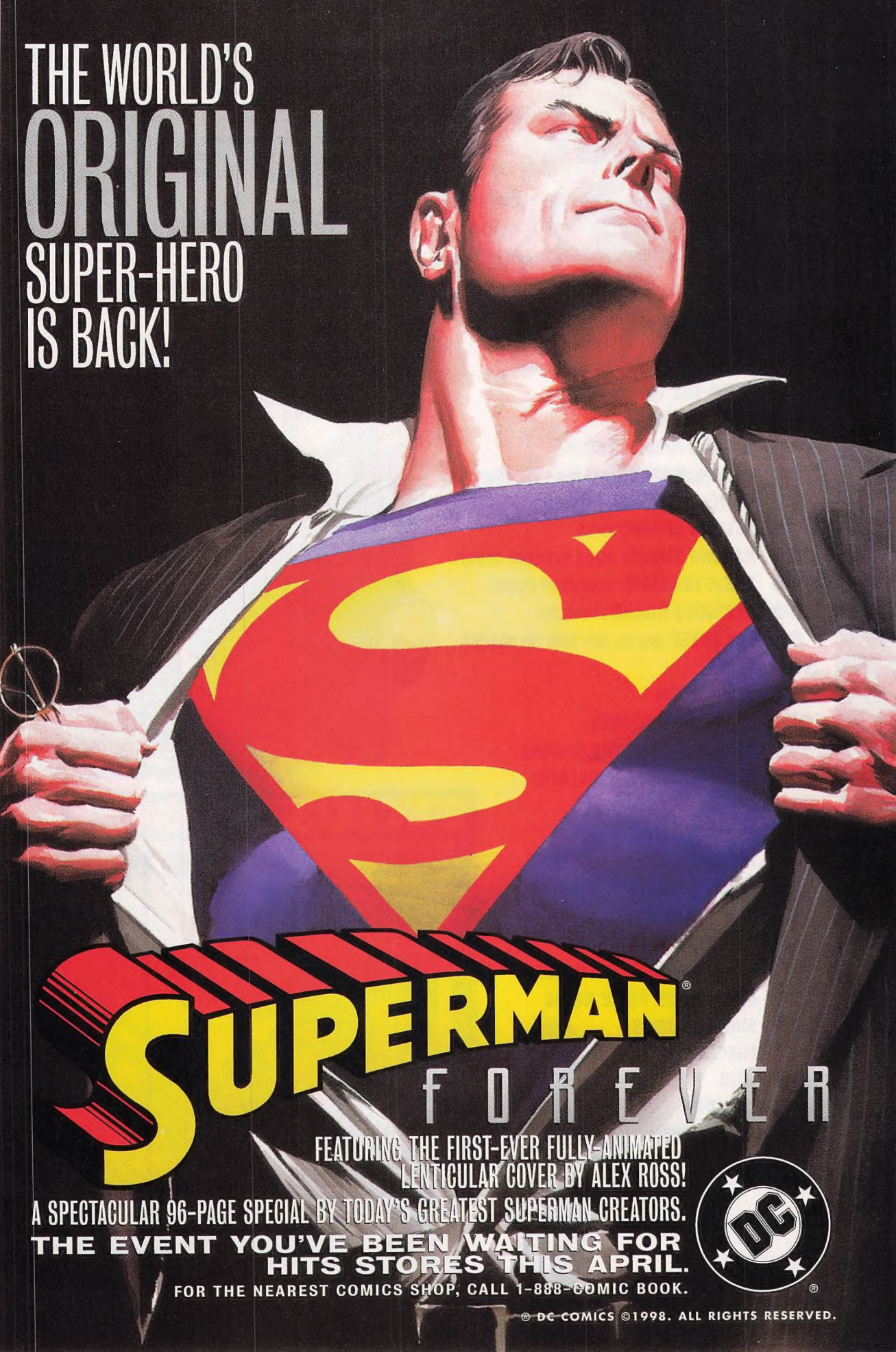


ON THE COVERS

CABLE (left) was illustrated by José Ladrónn and colored by Liquid Graphics. Plug in to **page 36** to see the new direction the hero's title is headed. **AVENGERS** was illustrated by George Pérez and colored by Liquid Graphics. To take a sneak peek inside the Avengers' secret files, check out **page 57**.

CABLE, THE AVENGERS ™ & © MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. PHOTOS: PAUL SCHIRALDI.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COOL STUFF THROUGH THE MAIL

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GENERATION X #1/2

Looks like teen spirit! Here's your *only* chance to get the exclusive *Generation X* #1/2 comic featuring everyone's favorite high-school mutants in a story by Larry Hama and Alé Garza. Jam to **page 96** for details.

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PUBLISHER'S LETTER

"I TOLD YA, NO STARCH IN MY SHIRTS!"

THE NEW 'WIZARD'

Every page in this issue has been changed. Sounds pretty drastic, doesn't it?

Well, it is. For close to a year now, the *Wizard* team has been thinking and planning, targeting one issue to launch the brand-spankin'-new *Wizard*, and this is it.

The redesign of *Wizard* was implemented to help you find your way through the magazine, to make the magazine flow from beginning to end.

In addition to the new look, we've added new content. We've taken some of the most popular features from *Wizard*'s past and converted them into monthly columns and departments. Take a look at "Last Man Standing," featuring original art. It's a direct result of the tremendous feedback we got to our "When Titans Tussle" feature in *Wizard* #39. The new "Good Readin'" section of the price guide? It came directly from the "Shelf Life" feature in *Wizard* #60.

The bottom line is that we're listening to what you the fans want to see in our magazine. "Drawing Board," featuring fan-generated art, began in *Wizard* #28 and was discontinued in *Wizard* #62. Well, you asked for it, and now it's back.

We've spent a tremendous amount of time analyzing every single column and department, trying to come up with new twists and turns for existing sections. "Junk Drawer," the section spotlighting cool comic merchandise, has been renamed "Stuff," and we've expanded it to six pages to better showcase the unbelievable products being produced these days, and also to focus on the cool video games being made. We've adapted the section to incorporate all electronic media—online, computer and video games.

Our whole "Market Watch" section now includes more top 10 lists, the 10 hottest characters, artists' and writers' first works and more.

Why are we making changes now? *Wizard*'s strength has always been its ability to adapt to the marketplace. As the comics industry has changed, we have adapted along with it. But *Wizard* will not just report on the industry, but set the tone. You'll continue to find things in *Wizard* you will find in no other publication.

And that's one thing that will never change.

Well, I think this is the best-looking (and reading, of course) *Wizard* we've ever put together. I hope you enjoy the new look. Fill out the reader survey on pages 82-83 and let us know what you think!

C-ya,

Gareb S. Shamus

PHOTO: PAUL SCHIRALDI

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MAGIC WORDS

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FREE COOKIES... BATMAN vs. PREACHER... SUPERMAN TATTOOS... AND KIDNEY PUNCHES!

Those of you with powers of perception beyond that of your average liverwort have realized by now that this here issue of *Wizard* marks yet another redesign. But your letters tell us that most of what we *already* do is right on. So why change at all?

Well, things can always get better. We're hoping the changes you see this issue do indeed make *Wizard* a better place to spend time. But, as always, the response you give us makes the final determination. So make sure and let us know what you like and don't like in the new *Wizard* by sending a letter to "Magic Words," or by filling out the spiffy-swell survey in this very ish. Your comfort is of maximum importance. So let us know what makes you comfortable. Unless it involves going pantsless. We don't wanna hear about that.

And oh, yeah—enjoy the "Bunny Award" section this month. We got a buttload of responses to the ol' "three desert island comics" question, so we sample several letters there this month.

Onward and upward...

Hello there,

While flipping through your price guide, I saw a one-shot edition titled *Superman vs. Spider-Man*. I wanted to see who would win such a battle, so I tried to find that comic, to no avail. Anyway, I figured if I wanted to know what happened, I should just ask you. So...who won? Supes or Spidey?

Benjy Kaplan
Faboo42@aol.com

Hello. The answer to your $64,000 question is: none of the above! Which, when ya think about it, is pretty darned stupid. Now, don't get me wrong—I love Spidey. But any comic fan who hasn't been sniffin' Mylar realizes that Supes would mop the floor with the ol' Web-head if it came down to that. But since these inter-company battles have to be nice 'n' politically correct, no one actually "wins" a fight unless it's a *Marvel vs. DC* sort of thing, where they determine winners through fan polling and take the decision-making out of the publishers' hands. Bottom line? No one has the guts to admit their character would lose such a fight. It would be a loss of face for a company to admit that its character would come out a loser, even if it's in a *Galactus vs. Little Audrey* battle. That's the fact, Jack.

Go ahead—prove me wrong. Any publisher willing to let its character get his or her butt whupped but good by another publisher's character in a real, published, inter-company crossover will get a dollar from me. And a cookie. Your choice of cookie.

Dear Wizard,

I am a way-big fan of the Japanese anime "Dragon Ball." Will there ever be a *Dragon Ball* comic published in America?

Eric Thomas
Lillington, NC

No. There will be two. Our pals at Viz Communications

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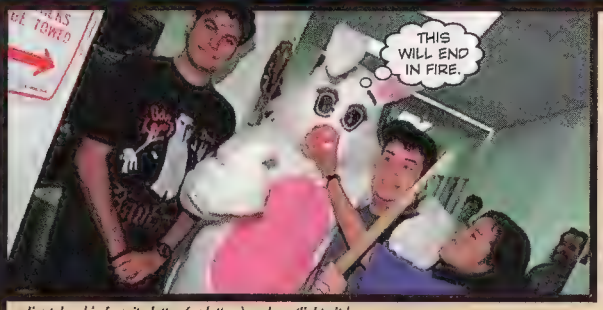
BUNNY AWARD(S)

LETTER(S) OF THE MONTH



Jim takes his favorite letter (or letters) and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Hey! Let's run a *few* letters sampling your response to the question: What three comic subscriptions would you want if trapped on a desert island?

I've made up my mind:

Bone, 'cause it's so well-written and drawn. You *have* to read the next issue.

Starman, 'cause there's nothing out there like it. James Robinson and Tony Harris do a spectacular job.

Supreme, 'cause it's probably the best comic out there. Alan Moore can write anything, and *Supreme* proves it!

Rami Gheith
Modesto, CA

1) *Azrael*. Great writing by Denny O'Neil, very sharp art and a protagonist who struggles between what he knows is right and what he knows is the easy way out add up to make this a favorite.

2) *Incredible Hulk*. Peter David has done more with this title than I thought possible. Every time I think he's gone as far as he can, he takes off on a new path with a new perspective on an old favorite.

3) *Deadpool*. Two words: Joe Kelly. His writing always amuses, and this title can be counted on for numerous laugh-out-loud scenes every issue.

Michael McCullough
Selbyville, DE

1) *StormWatch*. Warren Ellis has done wonders. His run from #32-#50 in volume one was awesome and the new series is just as great. It's a great read and deserves more recognition!

2) *Hitman*. Woo-hoo! This book kicks ass! It's funny, violent and damn well-written! 'Nuff said!

3) *Captain America*. There's just something about this book that I can't pass up. Cap is all attitude, with or without the shield (But he better get it back!). Hats off to *señores* Waid and Garney.

Dave Foster
Glen Burnie, MD

The first book I'd take would have to be *Strangers in Paradise*. It's real and touching, with just enough soap opera to be addicting. My second choice would be *Dawn*. I know that it's no longer being published, but with art like that, it's a classic. Plus, I love the story of Christian vs. goddess-based religions. And my last staple of survival is *Mage*. I love its new twist on the heroes of old.

Kelci Gilley
Carson, CA

If I could have three comics on a desert island, I would take *Spawn*, *Savage Dragon* and *Astro City*. All are entertaining and I don't have to worry about getting only one part of a giant crossover that confuses and angers me. That's why there are no Marvel or DC books on my list.

Chris West
Williamsburg, VA

In the final analysis? Staples like *X-Men* and *JLA* fared well, but *Astro City* and *StormWatch* surprisingly kicked ass, getting a lot more support than I would have expected. And for the record, if I could have any three *things* (not just comic subs) if stranded on a desert island, I'd take the world's largest box of Cheez-Its, a comely lass and a TV with a constant ESPN feed. Oh, yeah. That's the stuff.

BUNNY PHOTO: PAUL SCHRADER

launch both *Dragon Ball* (the adventures of young protagonist Goku) and *Dragon Ball Z* (starring old-fart Goku) in March as ongoing monthlies. And just ta show how true-to-the-Land-of-the-Rising-Sun they are, Viz is printing the comics so they read right-to-left, just like they do in Japan.

Dear Jim,

Why don't comic artists and/or cartoonists ever get respect in the "real" arts world?

Peter Grass
New York, NY

They do sometimes, but the ones who do ain't exactly the Jim Lees of the world.

Will Eisner, the highly influential *The Spirit* artist, was recently referred to by *Civilization* magazine (published by no less a high-falootin' organization than the Smithsonian Institute) as "the Michelangelo of the [comics] medium." Bill Sienkiewicz (*Moon Knight*) has been nominated for Emmy Awards—Three friggin' times!—for character design for the TV show "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?" Kitchen Sink Press' *The R. Crumb Coffee Table Art Book* received rave reviews from critics in *Entertainment Weekly*, *Newsweek* and *Time*. And writer/artist Art Spiegelman netted a Pulitzer Prize for his efforts on the autobiographical comic *Maus*.

So hold your heads up high, Geeks of America! We ain't no small potatoes.

Dear Jim,

Batman can get out of any tough situation, right? But Preacher's "Word" is all-powerful. He says something, you do it. So my question is this: Could Batman find out a way to stop Preacher's "Word"?

Matthew DeLuna
San Fernando, CA

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address on page 16 (put your age on the envelope). If you want your Internet address listed instead, the only way to do this is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look under "Wizard Message Boards"). C'mon, make a friend!

Well, earplugs would work pretty well. Jesse Custer's "Word" has been shown to work only if the targeted person can hear him. And even though he created Custer, *Preacher* writer Garth Ennis thinks there's another way Bats could get the drop on Preacher: "Batman is patient," Ennis says. "He could just wait till Jesse got drunk enough to pass out and take care of him then."

Hey, it usually works on me.

Dear Wizard,

I am a great fan of the late Jack Kirby and would like to know about his work after he left Marvel and DC in the late '70s. What else did he write or draw?

James Filosa
JF931@aol.com

The King moved on to do a few projects at Pacific Comics, including *Captain Victory and the Galactic Rangers* #1-#13 and *Silver Star* #1-#6, all during the years 1982-84. Later, Topps Comics launched a "Kirbyverse" of Kirby-created characters in 1993, including *Bombast*, *Captain Glory*, *Night Glider* and *Satan's Six*.

Dear Wizard,

What do you mean when you say "Pre-Crisis"?

David Basheukin
Lawrence, NY

"Pre-Crisis" refers to stories and continuity in the DC Universe prior to the publication of *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, a 12-issue miniseries of 1985-86 that "cleaned up" DC's history. By 1985, the 50 years of DC stories had resulted in...a mess. There were old versions of characters, new versions of characters, alternate Earths, Earth-2, Earth-4, Jerry Lewis and, I think, Hoppy the Marvel Bunny. *Crisis* merged, through a major cataclysm, all the worlds into one and gave DC a fresh starting point upon which to build its future.

Oh, yeah—the story itself? It's written by Marv Wolfman, penciled by George Pérez and reputed to be pretty cool. Wanna see what all the hubbub was about? Wait patiently, young grasshopper: DC will finally collect the whopper story in one volume in late 1998.

Dear Wizard,

Is John Byrne planning on bringing *Next Men* back anytime soon? And where has Mike Allred's *Madman* been?

Brannon Costello
Hattiesburg, MS
BrannonC1@aol.com

Next Men? Probably not anytime soon. Byrne has already

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DOMINDE FOEHR
Age: 14 Sex: Female
3336 Jefferson
El Paso, TX 79930
Likes: any WildStorm title, drawing/writing comics

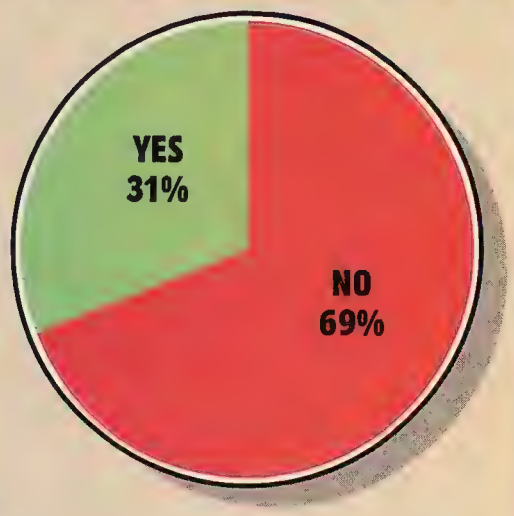
published 30 issues of the creator-owned series, and says "there are about 20 issues of plot yet to tell" in *Next Men*, but he won't bring the title back until the comic market improves.

Mike Allred wants you to know that Madman is right where he's always been. "*Superman/Madman Hullabaloo!* was a three-issue mini-series that took place in Madman's continuity," he says. "It just so happened the series guest-starred Superman." Allred is finishing up his current *Red Rocket 7* mini-series, and promises a two-issue *Madman Jam* by late summer, a project he's working on in collaboration with famed colorist Bernie Mireault. "It's going to be my artwork and his combined," Allred says. "It's going to look insane." Allred says four regular monthly issues of *Madman Comics* will follow in short order after *Madman Jam*.

SURVEY SAYS

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Do you like the new JLA line-up?



Meet the new JLA: Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Flash, Aquaman, Martian Manhunter, Huntress, Plastic Man, Steel, Zauriel, Orion, Big Barda, Oracle, and a rotating member.

Unfortunately, many fans aren't too happy with the new lineup. But why is that? "The JLA should be DC's big guns because DC *has* big guns," ranted one fan. "Marvel doesn't have many big guns like DC does. For instance, the Avengers rely on a few 'popular' guys and a cool supporting cast. But the JLA isn't the Avengers."

Of the 69 percent that didn't like the new roster, 61 percent mentioned how they wished that DC would go back to the original core seven. No more. No less. "We want Superman. We want Batman. And we want big, flashy, intense stuff with the characters we love most...not the characters we'd love if our favorite characters weren't around. I don't think that many people care to see Steel chillin' with Wonder Woman."

Dear Wizard,

I read in *Wizard* #77 that Michael Turner likes video games and has written and drawn a *Tomb Raider/Witchblade* comic. What are his favorite video games and does he have any plans to do any other video game comics?

James Dean
kellieann@juno.com

That wacky Turner guy (who usually draws *Witchblade*) has blisters on his fingers from both penciling...and joysticks. In addition to being a big *Tomb Raider* fan, Turner says he digs *Resident Evil* ("It's just spooky-cool and it was the first game that scared the hell out of me.") and *Goldeneye* ("I have *Goldeneye* nights with, like, 15 people. We play the four-player version and just kill each other for hours."). Michael would also like to do another *Tomb Raider/Witchblade* comic if Top Cow and Eidos can work it out. "I have a story mapped out for a sequel already," he says. "So we'll see if we can get it going."

Dear Jim McLauchlin,

What are Stan "The Man" Lee's, David Finch's, and your favorite cereals?

Patrick Holm
Bellevue, NE

Stan Lee. David Finch. Me. Cereal. Now *there's* a weird combo.

Anyhoo, Stan The Man says, "Quaker 100% Oats and Honey always gets me going in the morning." *Ascension* writer/artist Finch says his fave is "Count Chocula by a landslide! I just love the little marshmallows." Me? I prefer Pig's Eye Pilsner, which I'm sure we can all agree is a fine cereal beverage.

Dear Big Jim,

Could Superman get a tattoo?

Andy Danto
Pittsburgh, PA

You mean if he was stupid enough to?

It's feasible. Supes would need to be in close proximity to Kryptonite to lessen his invulnerability so that a needle could ink him, though. So he probably wouldn't, since that's dangerous for three reasons. First, getting close to Kryptonite is always a dicey proposition. Second, such a maneuver might compromise his identity to a tattoo artist. And third, in the words of DC's Superman Group Assistant Editrix Maureen McTigue, "His wife Lois wouldn't be too happy with him."

Geez. Get married and them dames start running your life.

BERNARD OH
Age: 18 Sex: Male
Blk. 122, Geylang East Central
#08-72, Singapore 380122
Likes: *JLA, Thunderbolts, Strangers in Paradise*

DERIN WHITE
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Sandy, UT 84093
Likes: *Generation X, Supergirl, Gen[13]*

BRIAN RENO
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Likes: *Gen[13], Darkchylde, Witchblade*

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TIM DURNING, 12/M
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HEATHER, 17/F
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Witchblade, Gen[13], Sandman

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BRETT STUART, 12/M
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Starman, Aquaman, Spawn

ADAM DESALVO, 17/M
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all Spawn titles

STEVE WIGNOT, 17/M
swignot@jtasd.k12.pa.us
most X-titles, *Darkness, Velocity Girl*

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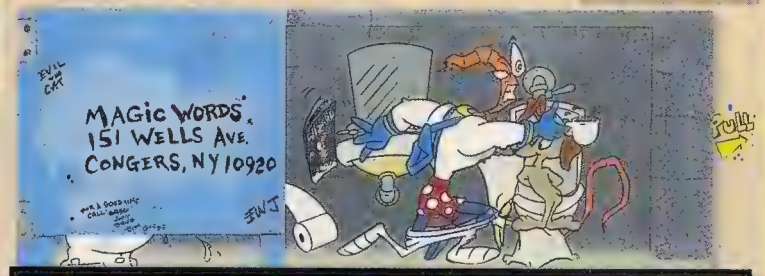
LETTER ART

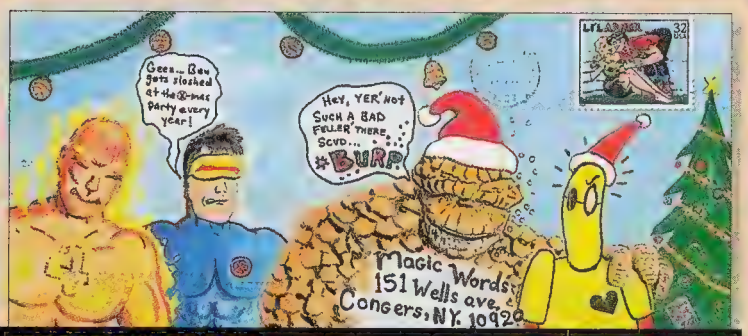
ALL FANS WHO HAVE THEIR LETTER ART PRINTED THIS MONTH WILL EACH RECEIVE A *HELLSHOCK* COMIC AUTOGRAPHED BY CREATOR JAE LEE, PLUS A COPY OF THIS ISSUE OF *WIZARD* SIGNED BY THE ENTIRE *WIZARD* CREATIVE STAFF! THE CREATOR OF THE WACKY "TWO-PART" ENVELOPE ALSO SCORES A SIGNED *HELLSHOCK* SKETCH BY LEE! (THANKS A TON FOR THE STUFF, JAE!) ARTISTS: PLEASE INCLUDE A CLEARLY PRINTED RETURN ADDRESS AND **A LIST OF CHARACTERS DEPICTED** ON THE **BACK** OF YOUR ENVELOPE. GOOD LUCK!

ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE



EARTHWORM JIM: NO PEACE Guy T. Olivieri
Edison, NJ (Check out the special "pulling" action!)

BATMAN Derek Croney New Brunswick, Canada



HOLIDAY BLAST Kevin Fitzgerald Burgin, KY

Dear Wizard,

Do you think something like the Chicago ComiCon in Ohio would be possible?

Andrew Schlaack
eschlacker@aol.com

Seeing as how Chicago is in Illinois and *not* in Ohio? No. But since you asked so nice, we'll just uproot the entire metropolis that is Chicago and transplant it two states over, thus rendering every eighth-grade geography class ever taught completely moot.

Where do you want we should put Wrigley Field?

Dear Jim,

I have a few questions to ask you about your world-feared kidney punch.

1) How long did it take you to master the art of the kidney punch?

2) Can you teach me?

3) Do you currently have any pupils?

Miguel Garcia
mfgarcia@prtc.net

I have a few answers about said punch.

1) About one nanosecond. Proper administration of the kidney punch is not a learned behavior. It is inherent. One is born with the talent to render others a gibbering, quaking mass of flesh with one deft blow to the kidney or one is born without the talent. It cannot be taught.

2) See above.

3) Yes. They're right in the middle of my eyes.

Whoa, hey—cheap humor! That's usually a sign that we've reached our end for another month. And the clock on the wall seems to confirm that. Enjoy the rest of the redesigned *Wizard* and we'll catch ya next month. Until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin is a devoted disciple of the number 53. All hail the sacred integer!

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'EVENT' HORIZON

Event to take over four Marvel titles, including Kevin Smith's 'Daredevil'

"This is *not* 'Heroes Reborn' all over again," said Shirrel Rhoades, Marvel Comics' executive vice-president of publishing.

The 'this' Rhoades refers to is a deal between **Event Comics** and **Marvel** under which Event co-founders **Joe Quesada** and **Jimmy Palmiotti** will produce four monthly Marvel books (***Daredevil***, ***Inhumans***, ***Black Panther*** and a mini-series) starting in September.

Event will hire writers, artists, colorists and letterers, work on-site at Marvel's New York City offices, and Quesada and Palmiotti will "effectively act as editors, but still work hand-in-hand with the existing editorial staff," according to Quesada.

Quesada and Palmiotti will also handle artistic duties on *Daredevil*—the only current Marvel title affected—and will be joined by "Clerks" and "Chasing Amy" screenwriter/director **Kevin Smith** as writer.

The contract runs for one year, and can be extended by agreement of both parties.

Integral to the deal was keeping everything within one Marvel Universe with continuity intact, a big difference from Marvel's previous "Heroes Reborn" deal, which whisked characters away to another universe. "We're not going to retell anyone's origin," Quesada said. "We're taking up the characters right where they were left off. There are no baffling changes, no pocket universes here."

So why did Marvel turn to Event—a company that has been on hiatus for five months, only produced five monthly books at its peak and, at times, has been plagued by deadline problems?

"What I like most is that they've agreed to take some of the smaller characters that fans might not have seen in a couple of years—like Black Panther or the Inhumans—and do something with them," said Marvel Editor-in-Chief **Bob Harras**. "'Heroes Reborn' involved our big guns—Avengers and Fantastic Four. Not everyone would want to take on satellite characters. But these guys consider it a challenge."

Event has also delivered top-notch talent to Marvel, some of whom haven't worked with the company in years. Nabbing Smith as writer for *Daredevil*—which is expected to start with a new #1 issue—was a major coup for Quesada and Palmiotti. "Getting Kevin on board was huge," Quesada said. "He's already getting us mainstream publicity in *Entertainment Weekly* and MTV. And Daredevil is our linchpin, because he's the most recognized character [in the deal]. Together, that's a tough team."

DEVIL MAY CARE Quesada's Daredevil will soon be swinging to a comic book store near you.

The rest of the team consists of writer Paul Jenkins and artist **Jae Lee** on *Inhumans*, writer Christopher Priest and artist Mark Texiera on *Black Panther*, and writers Christopher Golden and Tom Sniegoski and artist **Bernie Wrightson** on *The Punisher*.

Horror master Wrightson (see sidebar) hasn't done extensive work for Marvel since 1991. But Palmiotti has inked his work on several Chaos! Comics projects, and the two are quite chummy. Marvel might not be able to get Wrightson in the fold, but Palmiotti can deliver him, another advantage of joining forces with Event.

Why does Marvel need to give some of its books to an outside source at all? Rhoades insists that Marvel's "current editors are already busy with existing titles

READY TO GO Quesada (left) and Palmiotti have big plans for Marvel.

and new ones we want to do. These guys have new resources available and can bring fresh viewpoints and fresh takes into our office." Event gives Marvel expanded editorial capacity that doesn't burden existing staff, and—pardon the pun—an "Event" under which to launch new titles.

Take a person with real-world fame like Smith and pair him with a dynamic art team like Quesada and Palmiotti, and *DD*, which typically sells 25,000 to 30,000 copies in the direct market, could top 100,000 sales for a new #1 issue. *Inhumans*? Today, it sells zero copies. Under this new deal, it will be selling *something*.

So why not just hire Quesada and Palmiotti as editors? "They still want to do Event material," Harras said. "My impression is that they have no interest in becoming employees and want to continue publishing their own stuff too."

Existing Event characters will be back, and solicited through the *Marvel Monthly* catalog as part of the whole deal. George Pérez's *Crimson Plague* and a James Robinson-written *Ash* series are slated for August.

But Quesada insists that Event books are only a small part of the deal, and that new Marvel books are the focus of what he and Palmiotti are doing. "It's exciting to bring our own take to a book that I've been reading for years," said Quesada. "I don't *want* to wipe out what has come before. I mean, [Marvel founder] Stan Lee already got it right the first time."

So Marvel has plenty of reasons to enter into the deal. What hesitation did the company have? Harras admits Event's reputation for missed deadlines is a concern, but thinks things will be eased by the fact that Palmiotti and Quesada will work on-site. "These are Marvel books," he said, "so they'll be answerable just like all our editors." Anytime Harras has a problem, he can walk upstairs to Marvel's 13th floor to address it. "I don't foresee a problem," he added. "They've been very professional in every regard so far. They know that I have the 'yea' or 'nay' over all plots. I can sit down in the same room with them and look them in the eye, something that's totally different from 'Heroes Reborn,' where everything was done three time zones away."

AS for the general future of Event's Marvel line, Smith is locked and loaded for six *DD* issues, and Quesada won't miss out on penciling those. "I'm definitely doing Kevin's run," he said. "After that, we'll take it a book at a time, but I'm planning on doing a full 12 issues on *Daredevil*." Jae Lee is in for 12 issues of *Inhumans*, and Palmiotti and Quesada are already taking pitches from people looking to write *Daredevil* from #7 on and to do new mini-series, which could take the deal into the new millennium. "It's completely open-ended," Palmiotti concluded. "We're not going in with the mindset of hit-and-run. We want to be here for a good, long while." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

FOUR-CAST

MOM AND APPLE PIE

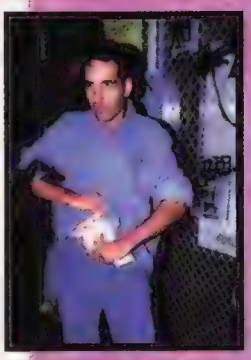
Event's Marvel plan calls for four books a month, with three ongoing series and one rotating mini-series. Quesada describes the talent lineup as "kinda Image-y, but with more classic storytellers in it." The September rollout consists of the following, with *Punisher* slated as a mini-series, tentatively four issues in length:

DAREDEVIL Written by Kevin Smith, penciled by Joe Quesada, inked by Jimmy Palmiotti. Smith describes his six issues as "heavily religious, very theological, but with heavy doses of action, too." As one might expect, Daredevil's mother, now a nun, plays a big part.

INHUMANS Written by Paul Jenkins (*Hellblazer*) with art by Jae Lee (*Hellshock*). Jenkins tries for a new view on the Inhumans by allowing readers access into the mind of Black Bolt, a character who never speaks. Oh, yeah–a country also declares war on the Inhuman nation of Attilan.

BLACK PANTHER Written by Christopher Priest (*Quantum and Woody*) with art by Mark Texiera (*Ghost Rider*). Priest says that T'Challa, the Wakandan monarch, "is compelled to come to America for a period of time while political events back in Wakanda drive the series. He tries to take care of business back home while stuck here."

THE PUNISHER Written by Christopher Golden (Marvel novels) and Tom Sniegoski (*Vengeance of Vampirella*) with art by Bernie Wrightson (*Swamp Thing*). Sniegoski says that this series "will have to have a just a slight tinge of the supernatural, 'cause Bernie's involved and he's the best at that." Sniegoski also promises a villain "who played a crucial part in the Punisher's past." ■ **JM**



The secret behind Todd McFarlane's artistic skill exposed! "I just cram blank pages down the front of my pants and let Ti'l Toddie handle the rest!" revealed superstar creator moments before a life-altering paper-cut faux pas.

Down-and-out Burt Ward seen working at local Warner Brothers store as a greeter. "Bugs Bunny refrigerator magnets on sale in aisle six. Now piss off!" commented former star before being sent out for sandwiches.

Now-forgotten Power Rangers forced into street-performing to make ends meet. "Good God, I just can't wash myself in public urinals anymore, I CAN'T!!" ranted homeless pop-culture relic before being moved along by local authorities.

QUESADA/PALMIOTTI & McFARLANE PHOTOS: PAUL SCHERALDI

ROSS, DINI FACE 'SUPER' DILEMMA

'Superman: Peace on Earth' sees Man of Steel try to end world suffering

Can **Superman** solve the world's problems? Writer **Paul Dini** (producer of the animated "Superman Adventures") and painter **Alex Ross** (*Kingdom Come*) will answer just that with ***Superman: Peace On Earth***, an oversized one-shot slated for November. The book, celebrating the Man of Steel's 60th anniversary, examines what would happen if Superman tried to solve the world's problems...in an interesting format.

"It'll be something of a cross between a children's book and a comic," Ross explained. The 60-page story will feature large panels with floating text elements instead of word balloons in a 10-by-13-inch format similar in size to the old Marvel Treasury Editions. "Visual imagery will be primary, with the story much more spread out than in my typical comics work," Ross said. "But it will definitely still look like a comic book story."

The tale, Ross says, "will address the age-old question of what Superman could do to end the suffering and hunger in the world. We're planning it for the holiday season, so it will be Christmas-inspired. He'll take on the task of doing something monumental in one day."

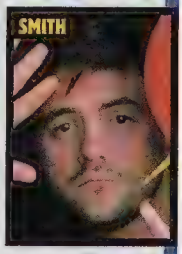
That will include dealing with human limitations and obstacles. "He'll run up against the problem that human need is so much greater than even he can imagine, as well as the fact that we might not get out of the way of what he can do. It will be the story of that quest, pitting Superman's ethics for where we could be versus where we allow ourselves to be. And all in a quasi-children's book!" Ross laughed. ■ **CRAIG SHUTT**

THEBUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

MARVEL IN CHAOS! Word on the drum is that October should see a number of Marvel one-shots focusing on some of it's "scary" characters (like Werewolf by Night or Ghost Rider) done by Chaos! Comics creators, just in time for Halloween!

SMITH FLIES TO 'GREEN ARROW'? He's a busy boy. Kevin Smith is on board for *Daredevil* and, according to DC editor Darren Vincenzo, "the most recent plan is for him to get me some stuff in writing for *Green Arrow*." If Smith signs on, he could be the *GA* scribe by January 1999.



TANGENT 2? Looks like DC was enamored enough of last October's "Tangent" experiment (existing character names with all-new personalities attached) to try it again. Spies tell us a new wave of Tangents–including Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman–is being prepped for late 1998.

BATT FLIES FROM 'ASCENSION'? Looks that way. In June's *Ascension* #8, inker Batt is nowhere to be found. The weird part? Batt co-created the property and is its co-owner. There may be some ownership issues coming down the line on this popular Top Cow book.

'STORMWATCH' BLOWS OVER? Could be. Fan buzz is building on the Warren Ellis-scripted *StormWatch*, but we hear it may be canceled in late 1998, only to be replaced by a new Ellis creation at WildStorm.

IDENTITY CRISIS SOLVED! We all know Peter Parker is eventually going to ditch the four identities he's currently using in the "Identity Crisis" Spider-Man storyline. But what we don't know for sure is if the identities themselves will survive! We've heard rumors that others will take on the roles of Dusk, Prodigy, Hornet and Ricochet and form a new team known as "Slingers," possibly as early as July.

WARREN BOOTLEGS AGAIN! American manga master Adam Warren's *Gen¹³ Bootleg* run (#8–#10) was soooo durned popular that WildStorm is dying to have him take a run at another story arc. We think you can look for a Warren reprisal in late '98.

WRITERS PLUNGE INTO 'FATHOM'? Could be. Looks like Top Cow is contacting a few well-known scribes to see if they'd be interested in helping Michael Turner write *Fathom*, Turner's creator-owned project debuting at 1998's Wizard World–Chicago convention in July.

SMITH PHOTO: CRAIG BLANKENHORN

PETERSON PASSES ON 'X-MEN' GIG

Opts for 'Glory' Instead

Brandon Peterson, reported last month as being tentatively slated to take the artistic reins on *X-Men*, is now going for the ***Glory***.

The former *Arcanum* writer/artist has passed on *X-Men* in favor of hooking up with writer **Alan Moore** for Awesome Entertainment's revamp of *Glory*. And that decision begs another question: Will **Alan Davis**, coming off an acclaimed—albeit short—run on *Fantastic Four*, be the new penciler on ***X-Men***?

The *X-Men* camp offers confirmation, but little detail. Former X-penciler Carlos Pacheco checked out with February's *X-Men* #74, and a variety of fill-in artists take the book all through the summer and into the fall. After that, Davis has said it's a done deal that he will jump on *X-Men* for a planned short stint of approximately six issues. (For more on Davis, see page 42.) But Jason Liebig, assistant editor on *X-Men*, said the months are still in question. "As far as Alan Davis is concerned, we're probably looking at December-ship [#84] and we'd love to keep him on as long as we can."

No such questions exist for Peterson, who starts on *Glory* with a September-shipping #1. The fact that he's working with Moore was a major enticement, and Peterson said he really clicked with the British writer during initial conversations. "This is going to be the best work of my career," Peterson predicted. ■ **SCOTT A. AUBREY**

GLORIFIED Brandon Peterson goes to *Glory*.

SUPERMAN GOES MANGA

Warren deals a 'Pair'

Superman is changing his look again, but don't be alarmed.

The **Man of Steel** will be getting a decidedly Asian flavor as he teams with Dark Horse Comics' **Dirty Pair** in a manga-styled crossover in late 1998/early 1999. The crossover is scheduled as a two-part story written and drawn by *Dirty Pair* writer/artist **Adam Warren**. Warren will draw the book in his regular anime-like style, giving Superman a unique appearance.

"I won't make him look completely like a manga character," said Warren. "He won't have large eyes, but he'll definitely have a stylized appearance."

The story begins with Yuri and Kei, the Dirty Pair's futuristic females, traveling back in time to a past which just happens to be the DC Universe.

"It's a natural combination for a crossover," said Warren. "Superman stops disasters, [and] the Dirty Pair cause 'em." ■ MATTHEW SENREICH

DOWN 'N' DIRTY The overly destructive Dirty Pair discovers there's more under Superman's cape than buns of steel.

MORTIMER PASSES AWAY

James Winslow (Win) Mortimer, 78, a longtime comics artist known for his Superman and Batman work in the 1940s and '50s, died from cancer on January 11, 1998.

Mortimer began working at DC in 1945 on Batman stories for ***World's Finest*** and ***Batman***. He also penciled a host of mystery and crime stories, as well as many covers for both Batman and Superman books until the mid-1950s. He also worked briefly on the "Batman" daily comic strip and for a longer period on the "Superman" daily. ■ CRAIG SHUTT

DAVID JUMPS SHIP OFF 'AQUAMAN'

Writer vows to continue 'Supergirl' chores

He retold **Aquaman**'s origin in the *Time and Tide* mini-series. He replaced the hero's left hand with a hook in *Aquaman* #2. What's writer **Peter David**'s next move on *Aquaman*? Leaving.

"I've resigned writing *Aquaman* effective with [May's] #46," David said. "I apologize to the fans for the abruptness of the decision. Chalk it up to the celebrated 'creative differences,' and leave it at that."

While a new writer has yet to sign on, *Aquaman* editor Kevin Dooley revealed that *Aquaman* #47-#48, a story that pits the older, hook-handed Aquaman against a younger, pre-hooked version, will be written by Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning (*Resurrection Man*). Despite his departure, David assured fans that he plans to remain on *Supergirl* for the foreseeable future. ■ MATTHEW BRADY

NEWS&NOTES

ABC STUDIOS
Double Impact creator **Ricky Carralero** does *Wild Things* #1 in April.

ABIOGENESIS PRESS
Strangehaven: Arcadia collects ***Strangehaven*** #1-#6 into a trade paperback in May.

ACCLAIM COMICS
In May, writer Fabian Nicieza moves over to make room for Ken Flatt, the winner of Acclaim's "***Troublemakers*** Writing Contest." Flatt helps co-write issue #18.

ARCHIE COMICS
May's *Archie & Friends* #30 is a special all-**Bob Bolling** issue, in which the Archie fan-favorite supplies all the stories and art. . . The video game adaptation ***Nights into Dreams*** becomes an ongoing with May's #4.

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT
Alan Moore writes May's *Supreme* #60 as Radar, the Hound Supreme, succumbs to the urges of spring in "Puppy Love."

CARTOON BOOKS
May sees ***Bone*** *Volume 5: Rock Jaw*, which recaps Fone and Smiley Bone's attempt to return a lost baby rat creature to its home.

CHAOS! COMICS
June sees the start of ***Evil Ernie*** as an ongoing monthly, with story by Phil Nutman (*Evil Ernie: Destroyer*) and art by David Brewer (*Incredible Hulk*).

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND
The CBLDF's new executive director is **Christopher Darr**, best known as the director of the Small Press Expo (SPX).

CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT
Starting with June's #12, *Shi: The Series* will rotate between horror and crime stories. Then this fall's crime story, "The Return of Arashi," brings Shi's original artist, **Billy Tucci**, back to the now-biweekly series.

DARK HORSE COMICS
Concrete's origin story comes to a dramatic conclusion with May's ***Concrete:*** *Strange Armor* #5.

DAY ONE COMICS
Astounding Space Thrills is a bimonthly space opera launching in May. Issue #1 sports a cover painted by Steve Conley and comics legend **Jim Steranko**.

GAIMAN, ARAGONÉS HOST 'HOUSE' PARTY

Contrasting styles highlight May one-shot

Drop-dead serious *Sandman* writing legend **Neil Gaiman** and humor artist icon **Sergio Aragonés** (*Groo*) extend an invitation to you: Swing by their house in May, when the pair collaborates on framing sequences that will encase reprinted material in Vertigo's ***Welcome Back to the House of Mystery*** one-shot.

The 96-page release will reprint classic stories from *House of Mystery* and *Plop!*, and features classic characters from the realm of The Dreaming.

Dreaming creator Gaiman said the *House* project came about because of a nostalgic conversation he had with Vertigo editor Alisa Kwitney. "When I suggested that DC might reprint some of the cool, long-forgotten stuff from *House of Mystery* and *Plop!*, she asked, 'If we actually did it, would you write a framing sequence?' I said, 'Sure, if you got Sergio to draw it.'"

She did, and at press time, Gaiman was planning his part in the title: "I suspect it's going to be a homage to the old *Plop!* framing sequences that Sergio and Steve Skeates used to do," Gaiman said. ■ **SCOTT A. AUBREY**

THUMBING OFF

WE IMPOSE OUR JUDGEMENTS ON ONE AND ALL

THE X-MEN Thanks to the new writing tandem of Joe Kelly and Steven T. Seagle, the mutants are more entertaining than they have been in years. Focusing on simpler, character-driven stories, the X-Men books are more accessible to new readers and still entertaining to traditional ones. The X-Men are once again the classic superteam of comics.

THE JLA ROSTER Instead of the Magnificent Seven (Superman, Batman and the original bunch) we now have 14 members. Big Barda? C'mon. Plastic Man? Give us a break. And Steel? He belongs in a bad movie with Shaquille O'Neal, not one of comics' coolest superteams. The new team can be described in two words: Watered down.

MARVEL'S RECAP PAGES The recap offers an ideal jumping-on point for new readers and reminds readers of previous events. However, Marvel must be careful not to reveal surprise endings in the recap page. (See *Iron Man* #2, where the Dreadnoughts appearance was revealed in the recap page.)

LOBDELL CANNED Lobdell's brief, three-issue run on *FF* was the best in years. While "creative differences" was cited as the reason for his dismissal, we wish Marvel and Lobdell could have worked something out–fans are the only losers in this one.

'CATACLYSM' This is one of the most shocking–and riveting–crossovers the Bat-office has ever done. The new "Bat-Quake" storyline is a giant risk because of the potential long-lasting effects in destroying Gotham City and even the Batcave. We wanna see more crossovers with this much impact on heroes.

LACK OF CONTINUITY Marvel is supposed to be one big, happy universe, right? Well, New York was turned into a jungle in *Ka-Zar*. Baron Zemo took over half the world in *Thunderbolts*. Did any of these events impact the rest of the supposedly "consistent" Marvel Universe? No, and that's a bad job.

KUBERT ON 'CAP' Kudos to Marvel for giving big-name talent like Andy Kubert a big-name title like the core *Captain America* book. Yeah, *Ka-Zar* was great, but we wanna see Kubert on a big book like *X-Men* again.

COMIC LETTERING GAFFES While computer lettering speeds up production, it has become a crutch for companies, and has caused excessive typos. According to *Amazing Spider-Man* #432's splash page, Peter Parker works at "The Daily Bulge." And don't even get us started on the difficult-to-read fonts, like the headache-inducing "Thor" font in *Avengers*. There's nothing wrong with simplicity. ■

NEW 'DEATH' SQUAD NAMED

Soon, someone new will know the cold touch of death. **Lady Death**, that is.

After eight years as the only creative team to handle her underworldly adventures, writer **Brian Pulido** and artist **Steven Hughes** are taking a break from the character with May's *Lady Death* (ongoing series) #5. David Quinn (*Faust*) and Mike Deodato Jr. (*Avengers*) take over as writer and artist, respectively.

"But I'll still be editing the book, so I'll still be involved," explained Pulido. And so will Hughes. Deodato is slated for issues #5-#8 and then #13-#16, and Hughes will come back to handle art duties for the four issues in between.

LADY DEATH

The time away, Pulido said, will allow him to focus attention on what he described as two large-scale projects that would place Chaos! characters in other media. Of course he's not saying whether one of those characters might be Lady Death herself.

"That would be telling," he said. ■ **SCOTT A. AUBREY**

SUPERMAN, DOOMSDAY SETTLE THE SCORE

This is it! The main event: **Superman** in one corner and **Doomsday** in the other. And it's *finally* the final round.

Doomsday, the beast that killed Superman in 1992's landmark *Superman* #75, will return in a three-issue prestige format mini-series titled ***Superman: Life***, tentatively scheduled for a September release. The men who killed Superman and wrote the first Superman/Doomsday rematch, 1994's *Superman/Doomsday: Hunter/Prey*, writer/penciler **Dan Jurgens** and inker Brett Breeding, referee the bout.

Doomsday will get plucked from the end of time by a mysterious force, according to Jurgens. But unlike the previous *Hunter/Prey* battle which took place in space, *Superman: Life* will be set on Earth. And because of the threat to Earth, Doomsday will not only go up against the Man of Steel, but the entire Justice League. ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

ACCLAIM COMICS...

WE'RE NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

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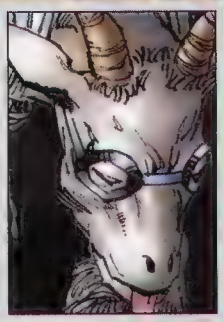
contest winners

LUCKY STIFFS

• Congratulations go out to Erik Johnson of Lebanon, Ore., who gets to appear in an upcoming issue of DC Comics' *Chase* as the Grand Prize winner from *Wizard* #77's **"CHASING CHASE"** contest!

• Sally Smeenge of Somerville, Ala. walks away with MD Bright's original art from *Quantum and Woody* from *Wizard* #77's **"GET THE GOAT"** contest!

• And *serious* props go out to Andy Bish from Berwyn, IL., the winner of *Wizard* #76's **"BE A PROFESSIONAL INKER"** contest sponsored by Dark Horse Comics! Andy's entry resulted in...paying work! He'll be inking a story in *Dark Horse Presents* #138, shipping in December.



DC COMICS

The first issue of *Gangland*, a four-issue anthology mini-series on the mob featuring the talents of **Dave Gibbons**, Tim Bradstreet and Richard Corben, hits in April from Vertigo. No lie! Everyone dies in April's ***Major Bummer*** #11. There is an issue #12 scheduled for the next month, so we'll just have to see what happens.

HARRIS COMICS

May's *Vampirella/Painkiller Jane* #1 teams Vamp with the Event Comics heroine Painkiller Jane. It's written by **Mark Waid** and Brian Augustyn and drawn by Rick Leonardi and Jimmy Palmiotti.

IMAGE COMICS

• HIGHBROW

May's *Savage Dragon* #49 sees creator **Erik Larsen** continue the Dragon's saga of taking back the Chicago streets from the Vicious Circle gang.

• TODD McFARLANE PRODUCTIONS

Look for ***Total Eclipse*** in May, a preview book featuring the old Eclipse properties to which TMP now has the rights. It's available as a premium to retailers, at one copy for every 50 copies ordered of *Spawn* #74.

• TOP COW COMICS

The new full-time creative team of Malachy Coney and **Joe Benitez** takes over on May's *The Darkness* #15.

• WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS

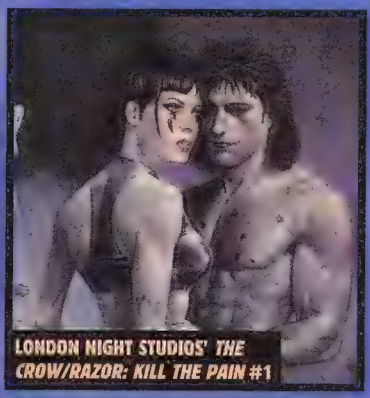
Studio Secrets: The WildStorm Approach to Comic Book Art is a 112-page, $16.95 offering in May that instructs on all aspects of comic production. The artwork of **Jim Lee**, J. Scott Campbell, Travis Charest and others is spotlighted.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

Comic giant **Alan Moore** provides story for May's *The Spirit: The New Adventures* #3, while fan-faves Brian Bolland and Moebius provide cover art.

LIGHTNING ENTERTAINMENT

April brings ***Sinthia*** #4, which concludes the first Sinthia story arc with the introduction of the demon Terrormax.



LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS' *THE CROW/RAZOR: KILL THE PAIN* #1

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

The Crow/Razor: Kill the Pain #1 starts the **James O'Barr**/Everette Hartsoe-produced three-issue gothic crossover this April.

JLZ: JUSTA LOTTA ZEROES! DC'S 1,000,000TH ISSUE

Four-issue series marks landmark event

It's the event you never thought you'd live to see: All of the DC Universe's regular ongoing monthlies hit #1,000,000 (yes, number one million) in September. The catalyst for this great leap forward? A four-issue weekly mini-series featuring the JLA and written by *JLA* scribe **Grant Morrison**, tentatively titled ***DC One Million***.

The story kicks off as the present-day JLA heroes are brought to the 853rd century (when DC's #1,000,000 issues would hit) to be honored for their heroic actions in a series of Olympic-style events spread throughout the solar system.

"Each of the descendants of the JLA live on different planets since all the solar system has been colonized," Morrison said. "You've got the Flash living on Mercury, Wonder Woman living on Venus, and Superman living inside the sun, where he's been secluded for hundreds of years. You've also got the descendants of the modern JLA in a group called Justice Legion A, while newer, different heroes such as the White Tornado and Blue Condor are in Justice Legion B."

Of course, nothing is ever as simple as it seems, and a serious threat manifests itself, aimed at killing the members of the JLA in front of Superman's horrified gaze. "All the contests have been hijacked by the big villain, who's actually going to become a recurring baddie in the DCU on a cosmic scale," Morrison said. "He's there to kill the ancient JLA, and he wants Superman see it. This is like *The Dark Knight Returns* for the entire DC Universe, while also being my part of the celebration of Superman's 60th anniversary."

Drawn by Val Semeiks, *DC One Million* #1 will hit stores the first week of September. ■ **MATTHEW BRADY**

X-FACTOR SCORECARD

WHO STAYS? WHO GOES?

Government operatives no more! With August's ***X-Factor*** **#150**, the team will relaunch in a new direction with a new lineup. "They're not going to care if people know they're mutants," said *X-Factor* editor Frank Pittarese. "Now they'll try to fulfill Xavier's dream of peaceful co-existence between mutants and humans in their own way."

Who's in and who's out? Here's what Pittarese had to say:

ROLE	OLD X-FACTOR	NEW X-FACTOR	MARVEL'S TAKE
Leader	FORGE	HAVOK	*Pittarese said, "Forge leaves because he can't tolerate Havok, who was really undercover with the terrorists, The Brotherhood. Havok just wants to be the leader his brother Cyclops is."*
Second-in-command	POLARIS	POLARIS	*"She used to be the mom of the team, now she takes over the brains from Forge's absence."*
Mystery Chick	MYSTIQUE	FIXX	*"Mystique was the 'mysterious one' and now it'll be Fixx. She's from the future, and her mission is to change the past to prevent the future."*
Rebelious Teen	SHARD	SHARD	*"Shard will remain a soldier, but we'll start to explore that she's a teenager out of time. She's a freak twice over. She's a mutant and a hologram come to life."*
Comedy Relief	STRONG GUY	MADROX	*According to Pittarese, Strong Guy is out to avoid the obligatory "big guy" role on the team but Madrox'll supply the comedy-relief as well as become the team's peacemaker.*
Loose Cannon	WILDCHILD	?	*Why no "loose cannon" in the new X-Factor? "We're trying to avoid stereotypes and do something different right now. If we need to go there, we will. But for now, no furry guys."*
Loose Cannon #2	SABRETOOTH	?	*Ditto.*

■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

KUBERT, GARNEY TRADE 'CAPS'

New 'Sentinel' #1 slated for July

Andy Kubert, recently announced as penciler of the tentatively titled ***Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty*** spinoff series, will actually pencil the parent book, *Captain America*. So where does this put current *Cap* artist **Ron Garney**? On *Sentinel of Liberty*.

Kubert will take over penciling *Captain America* beginning with the second half of May's issue #7. Meanwhile, Garney shifts to *Sentinel of Liberty* for July's #1. "When we announced a second Cap title, we asked how we'd get people to take it seriously," said *Captain America* editor Matt Idelson. "Throwing [*Captain America* writer] **Mark Waid** and Ron, the team so closely identified with Cap, on the spinoff should show fans that we stand behind this book and it's going to be good."

But how do the artists feel about the flip-flop? For Kubert, the change has given him his dream of penciling *Captain America*. "It's what I've always wanted," said Kubert. "I wasn't going to argue when Marvel asked if I'd switch."

Garney also saw the rotation as a personal positive. "I was a little skeptical of the switch at first, but I look at it now as a chance to work on a new #1 issue," he said. "And it's going to be cool to draw Cap in all these different time periods, giving me more of a personal challenge to create the feel of these different eras." ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

CHANGE OF GUARD Look for Garney's Cap (above) in *Sentinel of Liberty*, while Kubert moves to the core *Cap*.

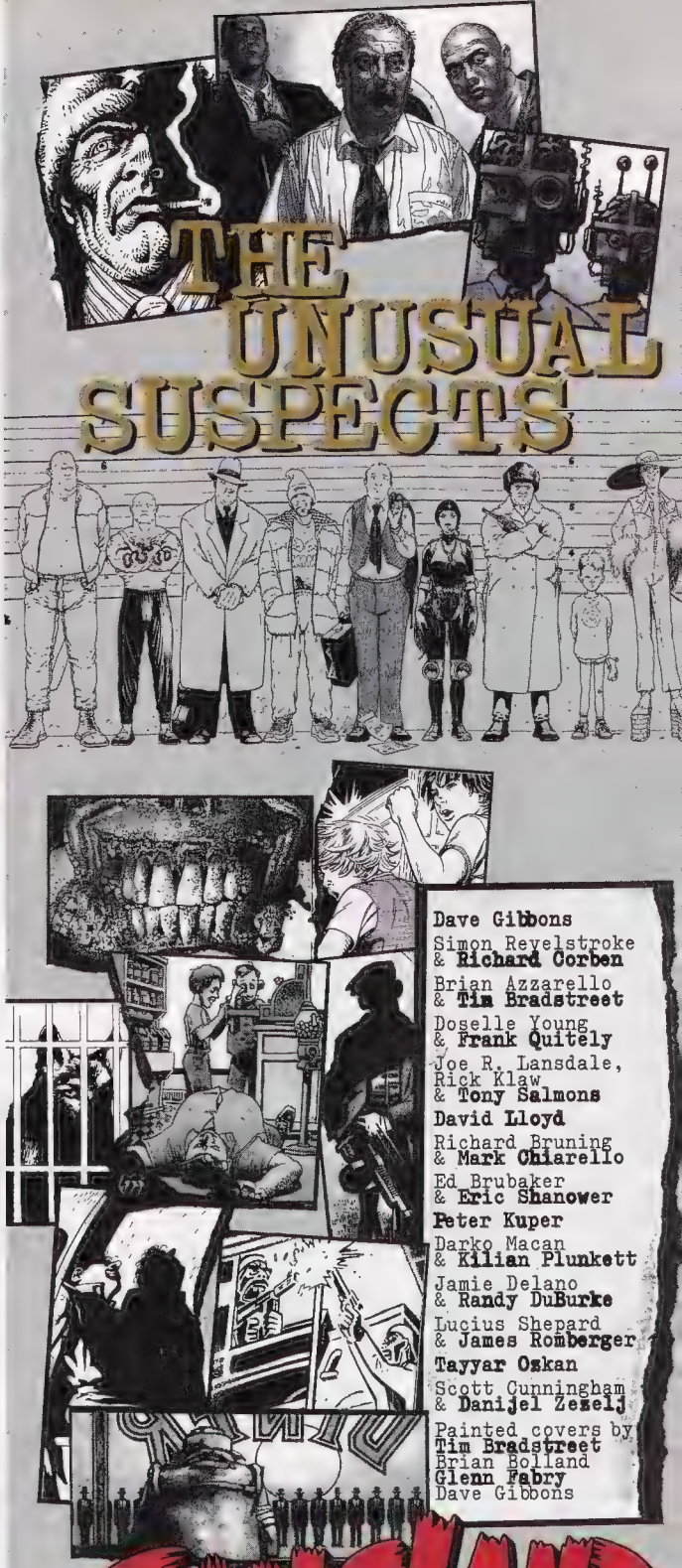
we looked it up

WHO? WHERE? WHY?

MOENCH, DOUGLAS GILBERT

(MEHNCH), proper noun. 1948-present; **1** Batman writer who has been penning DC's *Batman* title since 1992 and previously wrote *Detective Comics* from 1983-1985 **2** Writer of many other "dark" titles including *Moon Knight*, *Spectre* and *Werewolf By Night*; creator of *Moon Knight* **3** In Yiddish language, a really nice guy

MOENCH PHOTO: COURTESY OF DOUG MOENCH



LONE STAR PRESS

Elementals creators **Bill Willingham** and **Mike Leeke** are launching a brand-new 12-issue mini-series called *Pantheon*, which'll see print in May.

MARVEL COMICS

April's *Silver Surfer* #140 kicks off a three-issue story illustrated by **Jon J Muth** (*Moonshadow*). Marvel's nastiest villain crashes the **X-Men**'s history in April's *X-Men & Dr. Doom Annual*... *Excalibur* is canceled effective with August's #125.

MOORDAM COMICS

Mr. Beat makes a cameo appearance in *Bambeano Boy* #1, set to ship in May.

NBM PUBLISHING

In May, *Gustav, P.I.* begins a modern-day vampire tale set in London with painted artwork by **Ken Meyer Jr.** and **Malcolm Bourne**.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

The Purple Marauder reappears in May's *Poison Elves* #35. **Drew Hayes** presides on story and art.

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS

Potential-Unit Two continues the real-life saga of high-school junior **Ariel Schrag** in May.

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

The third issues of Viz's two manga adaptations of *Dragon Ball* will come packaged with a neato mini-poster of monkey-tailed young hero Goku or his older self. *Dragon Ball* #3 and *Dragon Ball Z* #3 reach newsstands in May.

WARP GRAPHICS

May's *Shards* graphic novel details the Wolfriders' struggle against the evil human warlord Gronmul Djun. The book, reprinting *Elfquest: Hidden Years* stories from 1997 to 1996, costs $13.95 and will be printed in softcover with black-and-white art.

ORIGINAL 'FAB FIVE' TO RETURN IN 'TEEN TITANS' RELAUNCH

Devin Grayson takes over as writer in July

DC already has the JLA. They're about to have the JLA Jr. So where does that leave the **Teen Titans**? That's what the original Teen Titans members will be asking as they reform their team.

Devin Grayson (*Catwoman*) takes over writing DC's *Teen Titans* from Dan Jurgens after July's *Teen Titans* #24. DC will place the title on hiatus before jumping into the 25th issue a few months later to relaunch the book.

"The plan is to bring back the original five Teen Titans: Dick Grayson [Nightwing], Donna Troy [Wonder Girl], Wally West [then Kid Flash, now Flash], Garth [then Aqualad, now Tempest] and Roy Harper [then Speedy, now Arsenal]," said Grayson. "We'll be dropping the 'teen' and exploring what I've jokingly nicknamed 'Titans: The Twentysomething Years.'"

Grayson must figure out how to juggle five characters with ties to DC Universe continuity. Nightwing needs to maintain his connection to the city of Blüdhaven and the Bat-books. Donna Troy is still involved in *Wonder Woman*. The Flash has his own book *and* is a member of the JLA. Tempest and Arsenal are slightly easier to accommodate, having no ongoing titles. But despite this Titans regroup, the characters will *not* give up their responsibilities elsewhere, meaning the Flash will be a part of *both* the JLA and the Titans.

Due to those other responsibilities, the original five will nominate a "second-tier" team to contribute in event of the first-stringers' absence. The "bench" members are still to be determined.

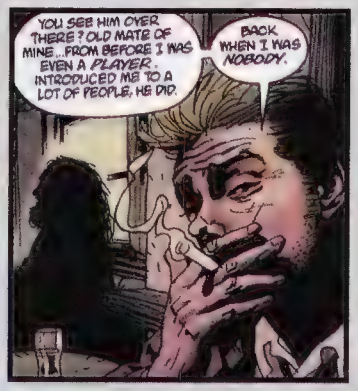
So where does this new brand of Titans fit in the grand scheme of the DC Universe? "The JLA is the first line of defense," said Grayson, "the JLA Jr. are now the immediate JLA successors, and the Titans are sandwiched between their elders and a young, hyperactive second crop of 'generation next.'" ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

DOUBLE TAKES

WHAT THE? WHO THE? WHERE?

THE 10TH-ANNIVERSARY *HELLBLAZER* #120 featured a pub sequence where main character John Constantine was joined by creators past and present. Jamie Delano, Garth Ennis, Sean Phillips and a shadowy, unnamed figure all showed up. That shaggy mystery man? He's Alan Moore, the writer who introduced Constantine in *The Saga of the Swamp Thing* #37.

Despite the fact that Moore parted ways with DC Comics in 1987 and has not written for the company since, he still sanctioned the appearance. "[*Hellblazer* writer] Paul Jenkins phoned me up and asked if I'd mind being in the book," Moore said. "I didn't want to parade my presence, but if he could do it in a non-intrusive way, I was happy to be there."



Editor Axel Alonso made sure Moore saw the page in advance, but added that Moore requested an art correction. "He asked us to actually lengthen his beard and hair," Alonso said. "He didn't want anyone to think he'd gone legit."

Seen something *you* want explained? Drop us a line at: **DOUBLE TAKES**, c/o Wizard: The Comics Magazine; 151 Wells Ave.; Congers, NY 10920.

BYTE THIS

SURF THE NET!

BE A COMIC STAR!

Want to win an appearance in *The Tenth* and be drawn by **Tony Daniel**? *And* then win the page of original art on which you appear? Well, there's only one way to do it: Log on to Wizard World to get all the details on this once-in-a-lifetime contest *and* see previews of upcoming issues of *The Tenth*!

All this and more can be seen at the new, improved Wizard World Online site at **keyword: Wizard** on America Online or at **http://www.wizardworld.com.**

CHAT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE SPECIAL EVENTS ROOM

MAY 12 (Tuesday)

• JOE QUESADA AND JIMMY PALMIOTTI

They're taking over a chunk of Marvel! Don't you want to ask them a few questions about what they're doing with your favorite characters? This chat promises to be out of control. Beware!

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

MAY 18 (Monday)

• BREAKING IN CHAT

Learn how to get work in the comic field now, with Glass House Graphics manager David Campiti (and special guests)!

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

MAY 19 (Tuesday)

• "CREATIVE DIFFERENCES" STUDIO CHAT

Meet **Joe Kelly**, **Ben Raab** and **James Felder**, the super-hot writers from the Creative Differences Studio. These guys will give you the real inside scoop on what it's like to be top-dog writers at Marvel.

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

MAY 26 (Tuesday)

• SEAN CHEN

Meet the guy who makes Iron Man fly! Penciler Sean Chen soared in from left field and is making a huge splash on the current *Iron Man* series.

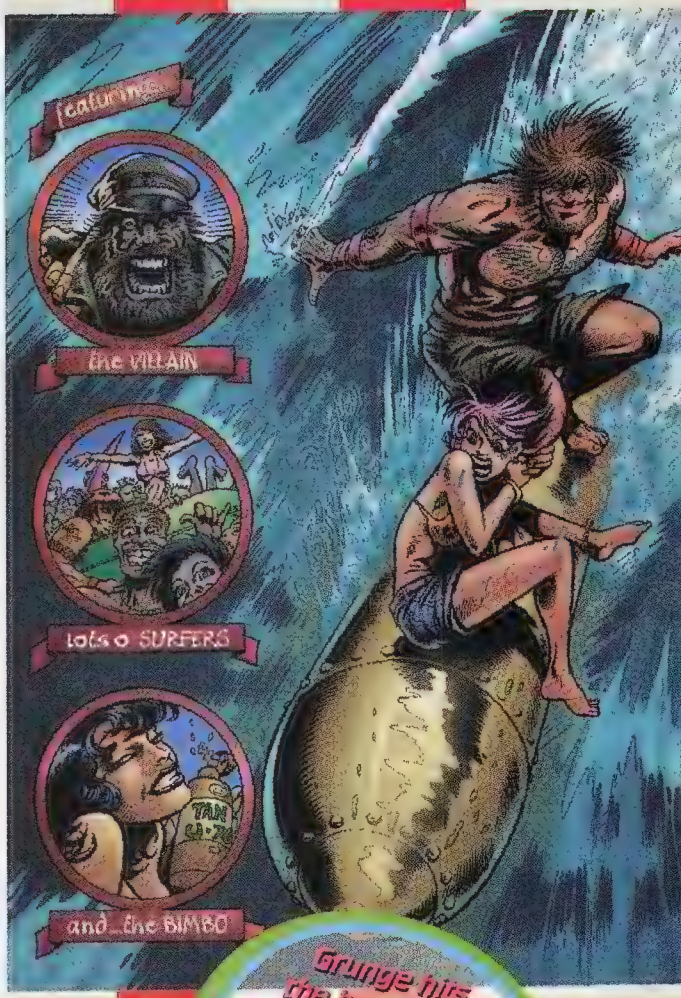
Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

Buddy Scalera
(WizBuddy@aol.com)

CHEN PHOTO: PAUL SCHRALLER

CATCH A WAVE!

Kevin Alderi Mark Farmer



Grunge hits the beach, in a special Bootleg issue by Kevin Alderi, writer/director of the Gen13 animated feature!

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GEN 13® BOOTLEG

no.18

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COSTUME PARTY From left: The Fantastic Four, Iron Man, Louie Anderson and She-Hulk.

PHOTO: JON SINNEMAIR

EAT UP THE MARVEL MANIA EXPERIENCE

Marvel-themed restaurant serves up good food, great atmosphere

BY JIM "GALLOPING GOURMET" McLAUCHLIN • PHOTOS BY PAUL "DOGGIE BAG" SCHIRALDI

Eating? It's about taste. Taste alone. Unless you choose to dine at Marvel Mania. A meal there becomes a five-senses feast in the Mighty Marvel Manner.

Marvel Mania is the world's first comic-themed restaurant, just opened by Marvel Comics right next door to Universal Studios Theme Park in Los Angeles, Calif. The restaurant's goal is to provide comic fans and hungry tourists with the best in food and fun. And, much like an arrow shot from the bow of Hawkeye, it does hit the mark.

Just walking through the front door at Marvel Mania is a sensory experience. Dry ice smoke and flashing neon put you on edge and the imposing, bass-driven music you feel in your marrow adds to the excitement.

The lobby is done up to look like every fanboy's dream—an Avengers Mansion trophy room, complete with amazingly realistic Marvel "artifacts." The highlight is a suit of *faux* Iron Man armor—which looks so lifelike you could jump in it—in a rotating glass display case. Four more glass cases display Captain America's shield, the Cosmic Cube, the Infinity Gauntlet and Dr. Doom's mask.

As you wait for a table, you can sample a drink at the supervillain-themed bar (alcohol is evil, y'know) and check out even *more* great items on display like the Gladiator's wrist-mounted sawblades and the Ringmaster's hypnotic hat.

Marvelites 21-and-over who bring their Avengers ID cards may want to try one of many specialty cocktails. But a word to the wise, or just the weak-of-liver: The "Amazing Fantasy," served in a 22-oz. take-home glass ($12.95) and containing three assorted shots of booze, *is* quite amazing. Drink two of them, and you're either under the table or back in the Silver Age.

After your table comes up, you progress to the main dining room, which is dominated by a huge 20 feet by 20 feet video display made up of 25 different monitors. The video screen shows Marvel cartoons, gives you character data files and even plays an original animated segment called "Rumble in the Jungle" (based on the Peter David/Adam Kubert story from *Incredible Hulk* #454) done exclusively for the restaurant.

OIL...CAN Can Iron Man escape the diabolical Willy Wonka Tube Prison?!?

The walls of the dining room are a true tribute to the good ol' days of Marvel: Blow-ups of old Jack Kirby

TIP WELL The waiters are the best there is at what they do.

Fantastic Four, Steve Ditko *Amazing Spider-Man* and John Buscema *Silver Surfer* pages are everywhere.

Appetizer time? Wah-Hoo! A dozen appetizers and salads dot the menu. We recommend the Rainbow Bridge Nachos (rainbow-colored chips, easily enough to feed two unless Volstagg the Voluminous is at your table, for only $6.95) or the Mutant Chicken Wings ($6.50).

When entrée time rolls around, those of you watching the waistline might opt for the Fantastic Four-Cheese Pasta ($9.95), penne served with mushrooms, shallots and—as the name would imply—four cheeses. But there's only one way to go if you've got a mutated appetite—The Incredible Hulk Burger, a massive *one pound* of meat, with onion rings on top, that even ol' Greenskin himself would have a hard time getting his jaws around. It's a beefy bargain at $9.95, but not for the weak of heart.

If the inhibitor collar is off and you're *still* looking for dessert after all this, you've got six options. Feeling fruity? Try the Fin Fang Foom Fruit Fajitas ($6.95), a fresh fruit flavor fiesta served with chocolate tortillas. Or those feeling chocolate-decadent and evil can go for the Sinister Six-Layer Cake ($5.95), six monstrous layers of dark chocolate served with vanilla ice cream. Our only complaint? No pie. But they're working on it.

And that ain't all they're working on. A second Marvel Mania is set to open in 1999 at the Orlando Universal Studios Theme Park in Florida. Marvel has long-range plans to open more restaurants in New York City and Tokyo, Japan. And 4-, 6- and 12-person ice cream sundaes are currently under construction and being readied for the next batch of menus.

Oh, yeah—those menus. Feel free to take 'em home! They're free souvenirs! Each menu doubles as a mini-Marvel comic and the plan is to publish new menus as new "issues" to keep customers coming back.

It's a great added perk, but it's not even necessary. With fabulous food, an amazing atmosphere and delicious decor, Marvel Mania stands on its own not just as a great restaurant, but a tremendous place to visit.

Marvel Mania is located at 1000 Universal Center Dr. and is part of the Universal Citywalk in Universal City, Calif. (at the junction of Ventura Boulevard, Lankershim Boulevard and the 101 Freeway). For more information, reservations or private parties, call (818) 7-MARVEL.

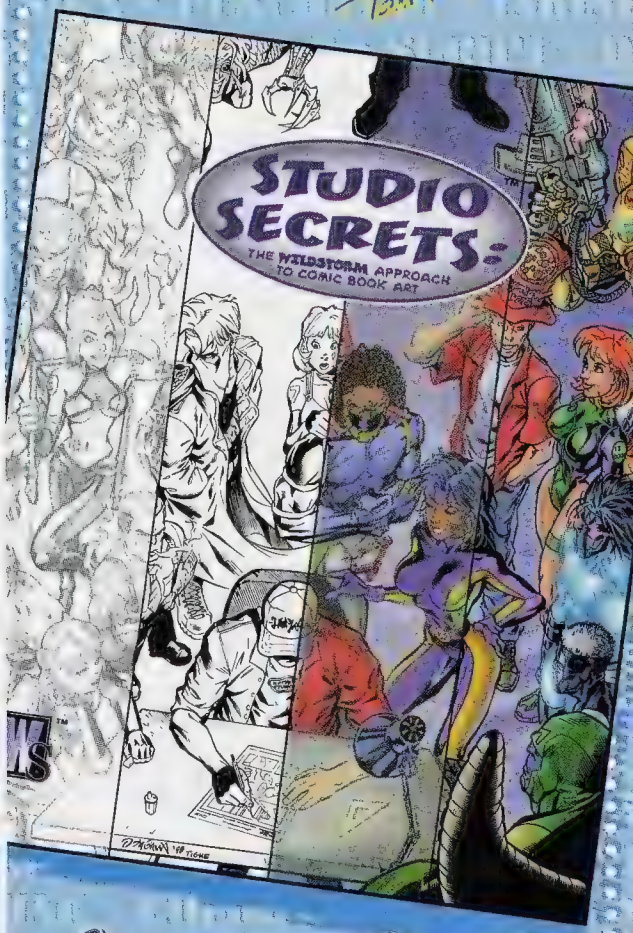
Inside Information!

Find out how comics are really made with ...

STUDIO SECRETS: THE WILDSTORM APPROACH TO COMIC BOOK ART

Get your copy now and be in the know!

Featuring interviews with your favorite WildStorm artists!



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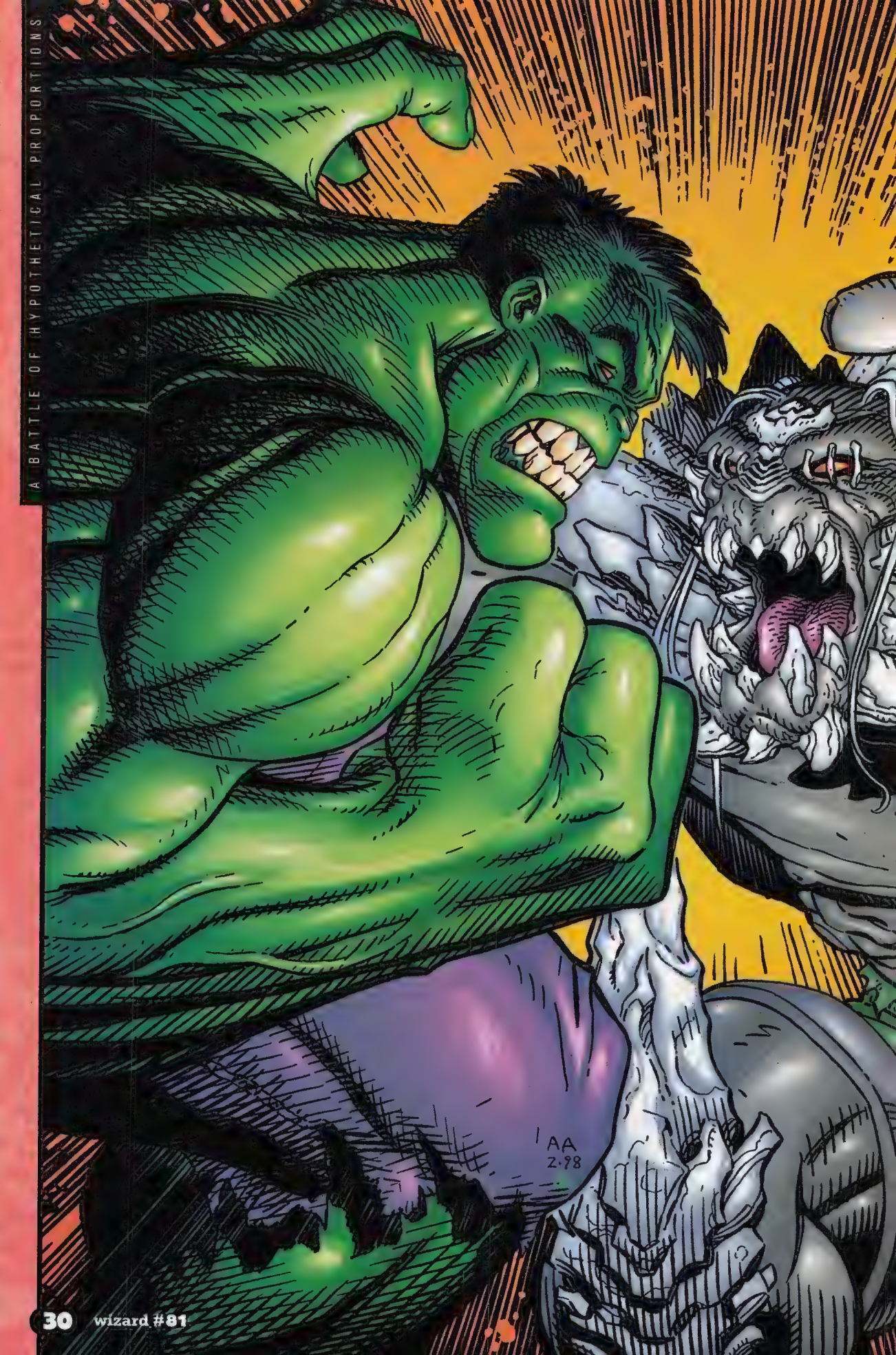
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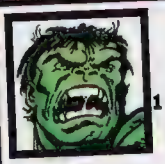
LAST MAN STANDING

comic battles you never thought you'd see

SAVAGE HULK VS. DOOMSDAY

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE



7'	HEIGHT	7'
1,040 lbs	WEIGHT	615 lbs
50"	REACH	51 1/2"
Gamma Base, NM	HOMETOWN	Krypton
"Rharghh!!"	QUOTE	"Rharghh!!"
Purple pants	ATTIRE	Undies and booties

Before we even get to the battle, note that we're dealing with the murderous, near-mindless, some might even say "ultimate" Hulk from *Hulk* #314-#319 and the pre-Superman-battle Doomsday from *Superman: The Man of Steel* #18. Needless to say, verbal taunts won't be playing a big part in this battle. So how do two of comicdom's more monstrous super-beings stack up? The Hulk has leveled part of New York (several times, actually), lifted mountains and battled the Avengers (and the Fantastic Four, and S.H.I.E.L.D., and...) to a standstill. Doomsday has leveled part of Metropolis, forced the evacuation of Apokolips (just by showing up) and kicked the JLA's collective ass. Neither of them seem to tire. Neither of them care about the damage they do to their surroundings, their opponents or themselves. Neither seems capable of being defeated by physical means.

tha winnah... Where Superman was victorious against Doomsday, the Hulk falls short. Yeah, ol' Jade Jaws is tough, but the majority of his attacks are just punches where Superman defeated Doomsday with a combination of strength, heat vision and super-speed. We see the bout lasting for several days, the Hulk eventually slowing down from the poison transmitted by the bone "claws" on Doomsday's hands (Didn't know he had them, didja?), and finally, after leveling wherever it is they're fighting, Bruce Banner finally knows peace in death.

this month's battle drawn by ART ADAMS

THE KILL

KILLER SMILE *Hitman* stars Tommy Monaghan, an assassin-for-hire who targets the superhuman and super-weird.

The Hit List:

The Top 10 Most Outrageous 'Hitman' Moments

10. When Batman punches Tommy in the stomach, our favorite Hitman tosses up his lunch. (*Hitman* #1)

9. Tommy's friend Natt is hot to take out the enemy's chef. (*Hitman* #7)

8. Green Lantern gyps Tommy outta a beer. (*Hitman* #11)

LNG GAME

Garth Ennis and John McCrea's ultra-violent 'Hitman' shoots from the funny bone

By Jay Faerber

Killing bad guys has never been funnier.

Ever see a crime boss whose Siamese twin is a rotting corpse get murdered? How about an over-the-top massacre at an aquarium full of flesh-eating zombie sharks, walruses and penguins? Or the complete annihilation of a hideously deformed Nazi demon lord whose weapons of choice are…a pair of six-shooters? Well, if you're a fan of DC Comics' *Hitman*, you certainly have.

Written by Garth Ennis and drawn by John McCrea, *Hitman* is the ultra-violent, infectiously funny story of Tommy Monaghan, a Gotham-based professional killer with X-ray vision and telepathy. How's he use his recently acquired superpowers? Simple. By specializing in killing the superhuman and the super-weird. It's hysterical. It's disgusting. It's John Woo meets Quentin Tarantino. It's…perfectly normal, at least according to its creators.

"So we're sitting in this Chinese restaurant," Ennis relates, "and I ask John if there's anything he wants me to put in the next storyline. There is. He wants a firefight in Bucket Burger and a huge fat guy exploding." That Ennis can relate this kind of brainstorming in such an offhand manner should be sufficient warning that *Hitman* is far from average…just like its creators. "We're obsessed with lavatories and that kind of thing," McCrea says without even a hint of apology. "It's just that British sensibility coming through. We don't particularly try to out-gross ourselves or anything."

Ennis agrees. "We'd only ever have an exploding fat man when it was the right time to have an exploding fat man. It's always a question of taste—we only throw in the baby seals being battered to death with a baseball bat when it's the most tasteful moment. The book is more about Tommy and his friends than the crazy event of the month."

Sometimes, unfortunately, DC puts a limit on *Hitman*'s brand of humor. In his very first issue, our intrepid anti-hero spewed chunks all over Batman's boots. And, had Ennis and McCrea gotten their way, that scene would've been even more in-your-face. Or, rather, in Batman's. "Oh yes," McCrea recalls. "The famous puke scene originally had Batboy standing with a pile of puke dripping off his chest, carrots and all. But we were being disrespectful so it had to go." And try as he might, Ennis just cannot have anyone refer to the recurring demonic character Baytor as "Master Baytor." "We tried it and thought we'd gotten away with it, but in the printed version, it'd been changed," Ennis laments.

"Censorship's a funny thing," continues the writer. "The ground can shift under your feet, if you know what I mean. A word they were happy with a year ago will suddenly become unacceptable by someone in management. It's hard to get a line on. Although you do sort of settle into a comfortable way of working."

Ennis and McCrea certainly don't plan to tone things down in the coming months. Following April's issue #27 conclusion of the body-piling "Who Dares Wins" storyline, issue #28 finds Monaghan and friends reflecting on the lives they lead, as well as their own

7. The vigilante Nightfist will hit you with his fist—hard! (*Hitman* #5)

6. Scores of cute zombie creatures are viciously massacred by Tommy and his pals. (*Hitman* #14)

5. Fearing he'll turn into a zombie, Tommy's friend Hacken cuts his own hand off and blows it up so it won't follow him. (*Hitman* #14)

mortality. Then #29 kicks off "Tommy's Heroes," a five-parter that takes the cast to Africa, where, as Ennis explains, "they get kind of embroiled in one of these nasty little, constantly-massacred Central African states, where the U.N. can't be bothered doing anything, and murdering scum are free to roam the countryside. So Tommy and his pals get caught up in this. It's really a matter of them going in with their eyes closed, and having to shoot their way out—as usual." The issues following "Tommy's Heroes" are still in the planning stages, but readers might get to see what made li'l Monaghan into the hitman we all know and love today. "He's an orphan, and he knows nothing about his parents, so we'll wanna go into that," Ennis says.

Expect to see more guest-stars as well, starting with Superman, who will hopefully be showing up in #34. Before all you die-hard Superman fans have visions of vomit all over those shiny red boots, Ennis promises, "We won't be doing anything unpleasant to Superman." And Monaghan gets to knock heads with another DCU tough guy in the upcoming *Hitman/Lobo Special*, by Ennis and McCrea. As Ennis says, "It's called 'That Stupid Bastard,' and Lobo comes crashing in the door to Noonan's [bar]. Being Lobo, he's just generally obnoxious and Tommy, having nothing better to do, decides to take him down a peg or two."

There won't be a shortage of supervillains either. Look for lots of new foes, including the Skull and Scarlet Rose. And yes, Monaghan will be doing the usual violent and hilarious things to them. "The Skull is a sort of super-Nazi," Ennis says, "and Scarlet Rose is this kind of weird, flaky teenage girl who can grow roses out of peoples' bodies, with the thorns ripping their insides out. It's all very unpleasant."

Both creators agree that creating new villains is the way to go. "That way they can meet bloody deaths," McCrea laughs.

Sure blood, guts and gore can certainly help sell a book. But is there some deep hidden meaning behind all the carnage? A moral, perhaps? Fat chance.

"There's no particular message that we're trying to get across," McCrea says. "Tommy and his friends are all fairly amoral, so it's not like we're trying to say, 'Do things this way.' I'd be horrified if I thought people started smoking and picking up guns after reading *Hitman*. Well...not so much the smoking bit. But the gun bit..."

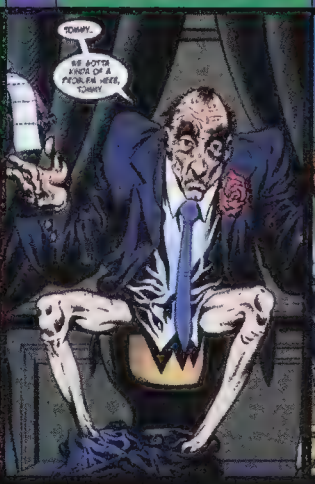
After reading two years' worth of Hitman *in one sitting, Seattle-based writer Jay Faerber packs a Baretta and is up to three packs a day.*

THE GOOD LIFE Drinking booze, being macho and visiting old victims is all a part of a good day's work in *Hitman*.

4. With a dead cat and a light, Tommy invents the very first Cat-signal to get Catwoman's attention. (*Hitman* #15)

3. Dogwelder dishes out his own brand of justice by welding a dog to his victim's face. (*Hitman* #19)

2. Don Ferretti (a.k.a. Men's Room Louie) likes to do his business in the john. (*Hitman* #23)



1. Tommy is marked by a crime boss whose dead Siamese twin is still attached to his body-rotting corpse and all. (*Hitman* #4)

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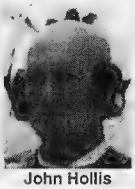
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Uncle Owen

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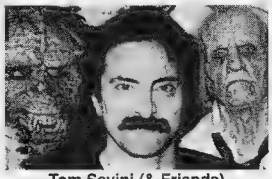
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POP CULTURE FOR THE MILLENNIUM

Cutting t

The Cord

Marvel's sleek new Cable to wear less, shoot less and interact less with the X-Men

For too long now, Cable's middle name has been "Convoluted." As if Nathan Christopher Charles Summers Dayspring Askani wasn't already a mouthful. Let's face facts: This outlaw Marvel mutant telepath/telekinetic is the son of the X-Men's Cyclops and a clone of Jean Grey, was sent to a nightmarish future to cure a techno-virus he contracted as an infant, and was sent back to the present to stop that future from happening…and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Cable's new writer Joe Casey plans to change all that.

"Cable, since his inception, has always kind of been behind the 8-ball about what he's all about and what he's supposed to be," explains Casey, who hopped on board in December with *Cable* #51, joining hot rookie artist José Ladrónn. "It's been an endless series of writers trying to fix him," Casey says, "and adding things on to try and answer all the questions that readers have about him. So what we're trying to do is strip away all the nonsense that surrounds him and get down to what I see as his essence."

"Comic books sometimes forget characters need to have a life away from the adventure," says Ladrónn. "If we put a life in our stories—not just fight, fight, fight—we can have richness. I think Cable needs to find something he's missing. He needs to recover his whole life."

On the road to recovery, Cable's first step will be to rediscover his true, undiluted self. Cable's "essence," as Casey describes it, is that he's a hero. Period. At his core, Cable's just a guy on the side of the angels, trying to rid the world of the

X-PATRIATE New *Cable* writer Casey plans to give the hero his own life outside the X-Universe.

By Scott A. Aubrey

would-be world conqueror Apocalypse. The rest of it—Cable's absurdly complicated origin, his group affiliations, his unending supply of firepower—is all secondary.

"*Cable*'s not a book that's just about X-Men, footnotes, minutiae and lore that only a handful of people can begin to keep track of," Casey says. "What we're trying to do is tell stories where you don't need to know all that stuff to enjoy what's going on in the book—and to be able to read it and enjoy it."

For the record, Casey doesn't plan on simply trashing the years of confusing stories that have come before him; instead, he'll leave a lot of it by the wayside. And because much of Cable's confusing past is bogged down in a muck of X-storylines, fans should prepare for a de-emphasis of the character's connections with other mutants. Cable will still associate with the X-Men on occasion, but those meetings will likely occur in other titles. He will also be affected by this summer's big X-Men event—a storyline that will see his telekinetic powers changed drastically—but Cable's participation will be limited to brief appearances in the X-Men books. That will leave plenty of room in the pages of *Cable* for solo exploits and appearances by various non-mutant Marvel characters.

"What we want to do is make this a book people will buy not because they're completists and they want to get all their mutant books, but because the book is good and there's quality stuff going on," says Casey. "It's a bit of a risk pulling away from the other X-titles, but if we can pull it off, that's where the glory is."

Of course, one mutant tie—Cable's mission to topple Apocalypse—cannot be disregarded, not unless Casey wants a mob of irate X-fans on his case. "The final confrontation between Cable and Apocalypse is coming. It will happen," vows the writer. "It will be a definite ending to that thread that's really been around since the beginning." Tentatively, issue #75, set to release in December 1999, will contain the long-awaited battle. Readers will have to bide their time in the meantime; Apocalypse will be laying low.

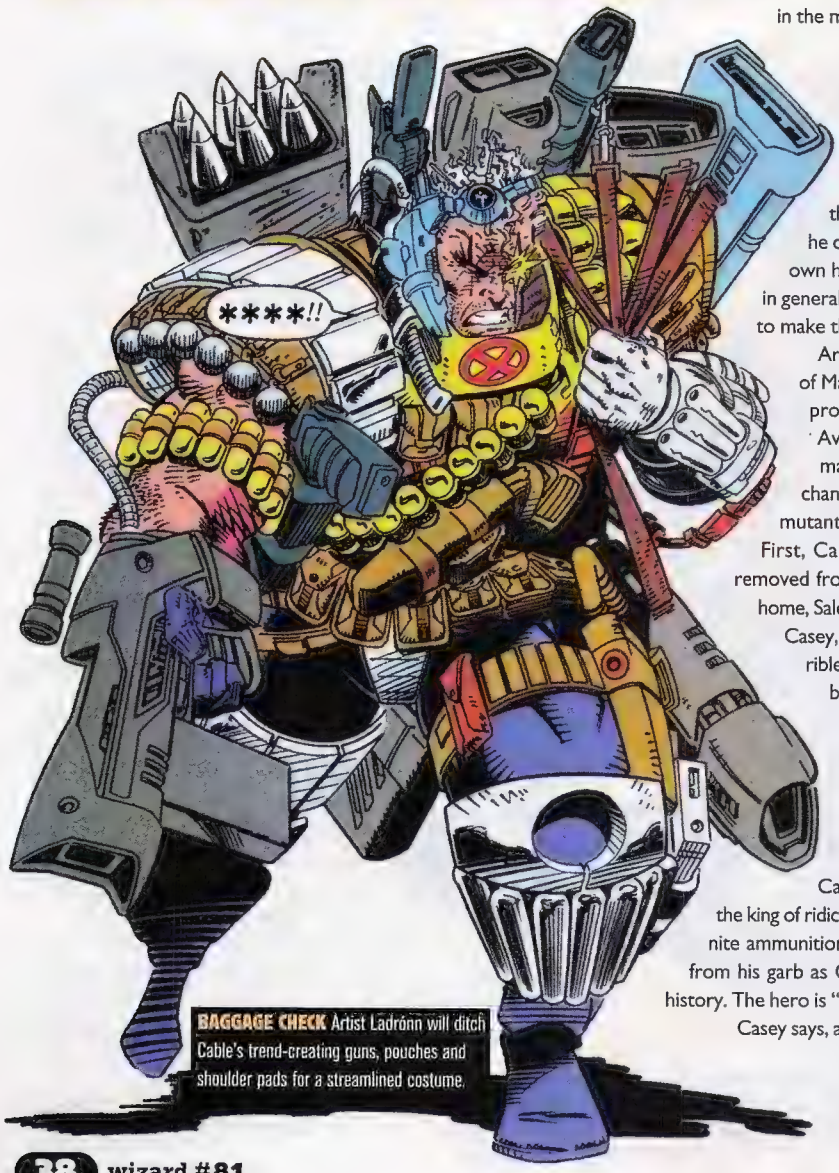
"We're trying to strip away all the nonsense that surrounds him and get down to his essence." —*Joe Casey*, Cable writer

In the past, Cable was defined by his obsession with his arch-foe, but that too will change in this brave, new world. Casey explains: "The thing that [former *Cable* writer] James Robinson started and I'm going to continue with is to show there's more to Cable than just Apocalypse. That's the specific mission he came back for, but what he's discovering is his own humanity, and how he should serve humanity in general. His role is to do in the present what he can to make the future a better place."

And if the hero just happens to run into some of Marvel's non-mutant heroes and villains in the process, well, so much the better for Casey, an Avengers fan who plans to instill "classic dramatic values" in the pages of *Cable*. In this vein, changes—in addition to the obvious decrease in mutant appearances—shouldn't be hard to spot. First, Cable will get a base of operations, one far removed from the re-established peace of the X-Men's home, Salem Center. "He picks Hell's Kitchen," reveals Casey, "because in the Marvel New York, it's a horrible place. He feels at home there." Second, the big guns that have been the character's trademark since his inception are on their way out. In June's issue #57, Cable selects the futuristic Psimitar as his weapon of choice; the Psimitar will allow him to channel his telekinetic powers to maximum effect.

Fans will also have to say goodbye to Cable's accessory-heavy costume. Previously the king of ridiculously huge shoulder pads and seemingly infinite ammunition pouches, Cable will shed as much weight from his garb as Casey will from the character's convoluted history. The hero is "the last holdout from the shoulder pad era," Casey says, and Ladrónn, a classic comics fanatic, couldn't be more pleased.

"When *Cable* started, he was very close to the X-Men, so his clothes



BAGGAGE CHECK Artist Ladrónn will ditch Cable's trend-creating guns, pouches and shoulder pads for a streamlined costume.

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Cable Guide

What it took the Marvel Universe to get Cable

Only slightly more difficult than getting the cable guy to show up on time to hook cable up to your house, the path which led to the creation of Cable is as amusing as it is dizzying. It all started with one of those no-good supervillain types known as...

Mr. Sinister ▸

An all-around bad egg who "acquired" cell samples from a potentially powerful pre-pubescent mutant by the name of...

◂ Jean Grey

A telepath/telekinetic who died as a result of becoming the conduit for the all-powerful Phoenix force, whose genetic makeup Sinister used to create the clone known as...

Madelyne Pryor ▸

A major nut job who would eventually attempt to merge our reality with that of the demonic Limbo, but who would first fall in love with...

◂ Scott Summers

The two would make goo-goo eyes, get married and have a child who would NOT be known as...

Rachel Summers ▸

The child of a Jean Grey and a Scott Summers from a hellish parallel dimension ruled by the robotic Sentinels, she fled to our dimension for refuge. The child of Summers and Pryor from the "normal" Marvel Universe would be...

◂ Nathan Summers

A mutant with immense telekinetic potential who was exposed to the techno-organic virus and would have died if not rescued by...

The Askani ▸

A future version of the X-Men founded by a future version of Rachel Summers. One of the Askani returned to the present, then took the child to the future, where their advanced technology could save his life. There, the child was raised by...

◂ Jean Grey and Scott Summers

Scott and the recently alive Jean Grey had their consciousnesses transported to the future bodies known as "Redd" and "Slym." The two raised Nathan to about 10 years old or so before returning to their own time, where they would battle...

Stryfe ▸

A clone of Cable spared the ravages of the techno-organic virus, the now-deceased Stryfe was an exact, though evil, version of Cable created as an instrument of destruction by...

◂ Apocalypse

A mutant of immense power who ruled the future world of the Askani, Apocalypse was also the ruler of yet another parallel dimension, which was the home to...

X-Man ▸

The "Cable" of that dimension, this Nathan Summers is a teenager of unbelievable telekinetic/telepathic ability, who has since made the main Marvel Universe his home, never having met...

◂ Jenskot

The freedom fighter from the Askani future who would ultimately marry the adult Nathan Summers and–before her untimely death–give birth to the child...

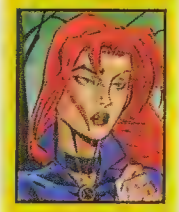
Tyler ▸

Once known as the weapon-supplier Tolliver, and later as Genesis, this bad apple (who, ironically enough, would be killed while in the employ of Apocalypse), was the son of...

◂ Cable

Who has since journeyed back in time to the present-day Marvel Universe. His goal: Find Apocalypse, confront Apocalypse, kill Apocalypse.

We hope he pulls it off, 'cause what we wanna see is what happens when you kill the guy who was responsible for the hellish future that made you what you are before he's had a chance to make that future hellish.



looked a lot like Cyclops'," Ladrónn notes. "Now there will be more differences. He will have more details in the clothes, details in the texture. I'm trying to remove all the big parts...for me, they're like junk. I think Cable needs more elasticity."

What Cable is *really* going to need is a breather. Casey and Ladrónn's plan to start from scratch will offer Cable little lag time. Following the "Hellfire Hunt" storyline, which wrapped with February's issue #53, Cable teams with the Black Panther in Wakanda to combat the villainy of Klaw. Then comes a New York urban crime story Casey says is done in the vein of Frank Miller's gritty *Daredevil* run from the early '80s. The adventure, which will feature Cable's sometime sidekick Domino, also includes cameos by a number of second-string Marvel villains like Speed-Demon, Hydro-Man and Stilt-Man; Daredevil's alter ego, Matt Murdock, is also slated for a tentative appearance.

Further down the line, in a three-part story arc set for the fall, Cable goes toe-to-toe with S.H.I.E.L.D., and is no better for the experience. "Cable's always been seen as this terrorist-type character, an outlaw mutant, totally riding the fence between the right side and the wrong side of the law," explains Casey. "So S.H.I.E.L.D. is going to settle this once and for all. They've had run-ins with Cable before, but they're going to actually go after him and try to take him down—and they're going to pretty much succeed."

The storyline will flesh out Cable's relationship with his old buddy, G.W. Bridge, who's now a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent, but will also flash some light into the darker corners of S.H.I.E.L.D. From those corners will come Agent 18, a super-covert S.H.I.E.L.D. manhunter. "We're going to be seeing the factions of S.H.I.E.L.D. that make their own rules," Casey says.

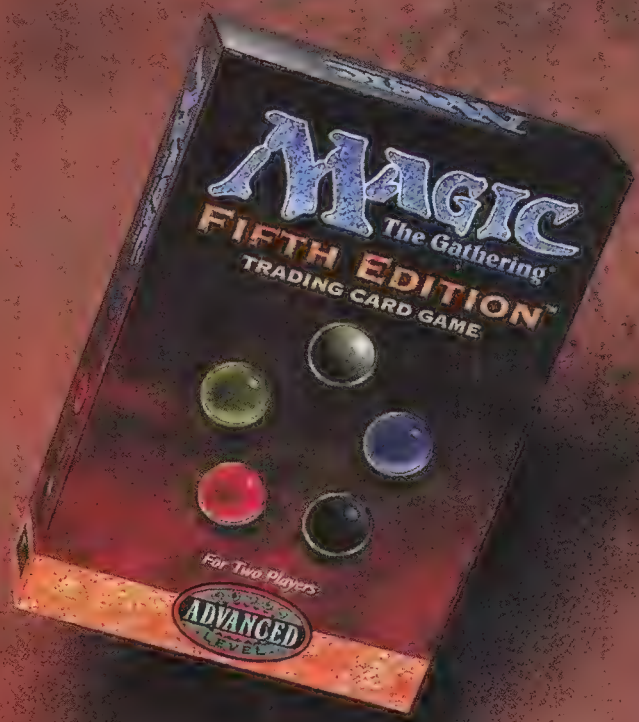
Also in the works is an expanded supporting cast. Blaquesmith, Cable's mentor, will reappear—despite his supposed death in *Cable* #32. And former tabloid journalist Irene Merryweather will stick around, maintaining her role as a chronicler of Cable's mission. Casey plans to use the character not just as a confidante for Cable, but as an occasional narrator, one who can summarize events from past issues in a quick, uncomplicated fashion.

With a new look and new, lightened history will come some new characters. As Cable becomes more integrated in Hell's Kitchen, he will be socializing with the locals—and one woman in particular. "There's going to be a romance with a normal person, which is going to be a big conflict for Cable, because he's finally going to be able to experience some basic humanity, stuff that he's been denied for a long time," says Casey. "But his mission is still going to be foremost on his mind."

Undoubtedly, that will be a lot easier without all the excess baggage—and those big-ass shoulder pads—weighing him down.

Massachusetts-based freelance thug Scott A. Aubrey has been sent back to the future (or maybe forward to the past) to prevent the Spice Girls from ever joining forces with Pauly Shore.

WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?



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ATTACK POSITION With the relaunched *FF* and this summer's *JLA: The Nail* (art shown), Davis prepares for the limelight again.

Bad luck, corporate politics, modesty and a host of factors have denied ALAN DAVIS the spotlight. 1998 may be his turn to shine.

Alan Davis has always been one high-profile project away from superstardom. And he's still waiting for that project.

1998 could change that, as the writer/penciler is coming off a successful three-issue stint relaunching *Fantastic Four*, and is gearing up for a high-profile JLA-related project and a six-issue run on *X-Men*.

It looks like a time to be optimistic. But Davis has been there before. A promising job penciling *Detective Comics* was cut short. His refusal to pencil *Uncanny X-Men* led to a pair of runs on the low-key *Excalibur*. Stalled projects caused an unexpected two-year layoff. Numerous other factors—including corporate indifference, severe modesty, bad breaks, an admittedly selective approach and a brief illness—have conspired to give him a lower profile than might be expected. For Davis, the return to the limelight was intentional, kicked off with the recent *FF* relaunch.

"I don't think it really qualifies as a plan," Davis laughs in his soft, British-accented tones from his longtime home in Northamptonshire, England. "It's more like my current strategy. I did the *FF* because I figured I ought to do something really high-profile quickly. Circumstances had worked against me, and I felt like I'd fallen down a hole. I needed to get myself out."

CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE WORKED AGAINST Davis from the day he started in American comics, it seems. He gained DC's attention via early-1980s work on *Captain Britain* for Marvel U.K. and a number of other British projects, including *Warrior*'s "Marvelman" (a.k.a. Eclipse's *Miracleman*) and *2000 A.D.*'s "D.R. & Quinch" with writer Alan Moore. That led to then-DC Executive Editor Dick Giordano offering him work—and a situation that seems to typify what his career would run into.

"They thought I had an 'American' style, so they offered me the [1986] *Aquaman* mini-series," Davis relates. "But when Giordano saw my first issue, he called me up and said it was great stuff—and he didn't want me doing it for *Aquaman*! He was desperate for a penciler for *Batman and The Outsiders*, and he said it would be a much better career move for me to do Batman." He laughs. "I told them Aquaman was one of my favorite characters, and I really wanted to do it! So they told me I could do both, but they wanted me to do Batman first. So I gave up Aquaman, and then they gave it away [to artist Craig Hamilton]." Davis' issue was scrapped and he hasn't had the chance to do the character since.

By Craig Shutt

on the brink

He really wasn't too upset about the switch to Batman. "The extent of my thinking process was, 'I'm working in American comics!'" he laughs. "If they'd told me to draw Batman in a skirt for an issue, I'd have done it. I never really thought my comics work would go anywhere; I was just doing what I was told and hoping I'd get another job."

Davis had a chance to focus on the core character when *Batman and The Outsiders* writer Mike W. Barr shifted to *Detective Comics* in 1987 and took Davis along. "Mike treated me great and taught me an awful lot," he says. But Davis stayed on that title for only a handful of issues, finishing with the first part of the four-part "Batman: Year Two" arc. (He was replaced by some new guy named McFarlane.)

As for his reasons for leaving Batman, he cites "editorial differences" and that his phone calls weren't returned. "My artwork was ending up being changed because editorial decisions affecting continuity [in other books] hadn't been passed on to me." He called to say unless someone called him back, he was quitting. No one called and he quit.

"I assumed the lack of feedback was because they didn't like what I was doing," he admits. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Davis would return to Batman in 1991 for the *Batman: Full Circle* one-shot—under the condition he could select the creative team and have an open-ended deadline—but the book ended up having to be rushed out, using other creators in those positions. "They keep asking you to be a 'reasonable person' about changes they want to make in what you've agreed to, until you're in a bit of a hole," he says. "If I'd known what the circumstances would be, I'd never have been involved.")

As soon as he quit *Detective*, he adds, he was bombarded with calls from Marvel, specifically *Uncanny X-Men* writer Chris Claremont. "After I took *Batman and The Outsiders*, Chris started calling and asking me to do the X-Men with him," Davis reveals. "But I'd agreed to do a year of *Batman and The Outsiders*. And if I agree to do something, even if there isn't any contract involved, I'm going to do it. But when I started getting messed about, I was thinking, 'I could be doing the X-Men!' Chris was calling me more often than DC was!"

To be truthful, more than his DC commitment kept him from accepting Claremont's offer. "X-Men was jumping into the major leagues," he admits. "I looked at all the stuff that's been done, with the best artwork and writing and stories, and I felt that my stuff would disappear into nothing. I figured readers would say, 'That's not as good as John Byrne's stuff or Jim Lee's stuff.' It was basic insecurity on my part that made me think it would be easier to do something slightly different."

Enter *Excalibur*. "When Chris saw I wouldn't do the X-Men, he started asking me if I'd do a new related book," he explains. "He said he'd throw in Captain Britain and Meggan so I'd feel comfortable with the team right off. I decided that if DC didn't want me, maybe I should go to Marvel."

DAVIS WAS A GOOD FIT for *Excalibur*, which launched in 1988. "I got the tag for being the 'quirky British artist' who had a sense of humor," he says. "I don't know why *Excalibur*

DETECTIVE COMICS

In 1987, Davis brought a stylized look to Batman, giving him a clean image while emphasizing Robin's youth via large, expressive mask eyes. "I'd be lying if I said I'd had some kind of game plan for this work, because I still hadn't figured out perspective and musculature. That's what worried me the most. I'd sort of figured out the character and what he was meant to be. Then I just had to get it out of my head and draw him. There are things I look back at and cringe [about], but I also look back with a fresh eye and analyze where I came from. It's not really a black-and-white thing."

was seen that way, because I thought I was drawing serious stuff! I do think humor is an essential part of any story; you've got to have an element of it all the time. But it seems to have become associated with my work. Someone else got the 'serious' tag and the 'angst-ridden' tag and the 'emotionally balanced' tag. I got the 'quirky British artist' tag."

Working with Claremont, Davis designed some changes to Excalibur's X-Men members, making Kitty Pryde more independent, aggressive and "Katharine Hepburnish," and stretching Nightcrawler to six feet in height. "He could fill the role of skulking around in the shadows in the X-Men, but in our book he had to come to the fore. He stood tall and became very suave and confident."

Davis calls his initial 14-issue stint on *Excalibur* a real learning experience. "I still regard Chris as the consummate comics writer. He knows how to develop characters, and his dialogue is brilliant. He's known for sometimes being verbose, but there's one issue of *Excalibur* [#14] that I still read today, because I can't believe how many funny lines he fit into it. It's probably the most densely humorous issue I've ever been involved with."

That learn-by-watching technique held him in good stead when he was asked to write and draw the *Wolverine: Bloodlust* one-shot in 1990 in conjunction with Paul Neary, a longtime friend from his Marvel U.K. days. "I was nervous about doing it, so I teamed up with Paul," Davis notes. He became even more nervous when *Excalibur* editor Terry Kavanagh then asked him to return to the book as its writer and penciler in 1991. "I didn't think it could be for real, but Terry really encouraged me," he says. "It was fairly nerve-wracking, especially since at the time, a lot of pencilers were starting to write their own strips. Someone had called them a 'wart' on the industry, and I thought, 'I'm going to go down as yet another wart and prove I'm totally incompetent.' I really felt like I was under a microscope."

But his writing proved successful. "In retrospect, you think because it worked, it was obvious," he laughs. "You forget how chancy it was." Writing and penciling, however, took him six weeks each month, which meant he fell behind. So he'd do a swath of issues, leave for a while to get ahead and return. After several arcs, he decided to leave for good with #67 in 1993.

"I like to do different things all the time, to always stretch myself," he explains. "I thought I'd done a regular superhero series with *Excalibur*, and I was looking for something new. When I quit, I was offered a lot of stuff, but it was mostly variations on what I'd been doing. I was looking for something totally original."

Among other things, former Marvel editor Archie Goodwin, now at DC, suggested a one-shot JLA Elseworlds book. "I thought that would be a really nice fanboy thing," he says. But it stalled as he worked on covers for *Flash* and the Legion of Super-Heroes books in 1993. Also, the title *Justice League America* was selling poorly, and DC's higher-ups weren't excited.

OLD FRIENDS When Davis returned to *Excalibur* to both write and pencil it, the prospect wasn't easy for him—it was terrifying.

EXCALIBUR

In 1988, Davis began work with Chris Claremont on the book he is best known for, *Excalibur*, which took a more lighthearted approach to mutants. The series gave him another chance to draw Captain Britain, who he'd revamped earlier for Marvel U.K. "When Captain Britain started out [in England], he was a cross between Daredevil and Spider-Man. They told me I had a blank slate to work with, so I took all the elements I liked. I made him and his outfit more thematically British. It was a hoot to do—I couldn't believe I was being paid to draw comics."

At the time, Davis was also cobbling together the ideas that became *ClanDestine*. "The thinking at the time was, 'Can he do something original?'" he remembers. "Again, in retrospect, everyone tells me, 'You should have come to us; we would have let you do anything!' But at the time, they all wanted me to do one of their existing books." Ultimately, Marvel U.K.'s Neary agreed to give him total creative freedom as long as he produced a team book.

But before *ClanDestine* appeared in 1994, Marvel U.K. scrapped its new material to focus on reprints. The orphan title was picked up by Marvel America, but it wasn't a positive experience. "I came off *ClanDestine* [with #8] because nobody was promoting it," the writer/artist says flatly. "Both sides thought the other ought to be

FANTASTIC FOUR

Davis helped relaunch the "Heroes Return" *Fantastic Four* series with writer Scott Lobdell. "I enjoyed the slight detachment of doing the FF, where you're sharing the responsibility with someone else," Davis says. He didn't go into the project intending to change the characters' looks. "All the source material, from Kirby's version to Byrne's and John Buscema's, is excellent. Ultimately, these characters will always be the same, with superficial stylistic differences between artists. We've come to accept what they look like, and I wanted to distill that down and use it."

promoting it, and no one was. It didn't make me feel too happy. I thought *ClanDestine* was really different, the best I could do, and I cared about it. I hoped it would get a good response, but there's no point if no one's going to know about it."

THAT SOUR EXPERIENCE in early 1995 began the worst stage of his career. He agreed to create a major, long-running series for Penthouse's *Omni Comix* (after refusing to create it for the flagship *Penthouse Comix*). But *Omni* folded, and the 17-page introductory story he'd finished wound up being printed "in one of their porno mags somewhere." He also agreed to do a *WildC.A.T.s Year One* mini-series with James Robinson at WildStorm, but it too got derailed. "I penciled the first issue, and then some horrible politics came up," he says. "I had to walk away."

The result was lots of pages drawn and nothing much in print. "I got pretty depressed," he reveals. He decided to focus on penciling, working on odds and ends such as an X-Men annual, a *Gen^{13} Bootleg* two-parter and the *X-Men/ClanDestine* two-part mini-series.

"I was fairly directionless, thinking of all the effort I'd put into things without getting anything off the ground," he says. "Things kept getting screwed up for me, and a number of people let me down. I'd had so much emotional investment in those [failed] projects, I decided I'd better just get back into harness and put some stuff out there."

In 1996, with word that the JLA was being restarted, he began thinking about that aborted Elseworlds project again—which became *JLA: The Nail*, due to ship this summer. "It took on a life of its own," he laughs. He wanted to do a 64-page one-shot; editor KC Carlson wanted a 12-issue mini-series. They compromised on three 48-page issues, which Davis admits were easily filled as he started packing in "more fanboy stuff."

His goal with the book, he says, "is to tell a simple, accessible story where you don't have to be a rocket scientist or DC historian to understand what's happening." The title comes from the allusion to a nail holding things together, but also literally from a nail that prevents the Kents from finding baby Kal-El's spaceship. That results in Superman never coming into being. The story picks up "right where things really begin to diverge and shows what would have happened if there had been no Superman."

After his previous rocky experiences with planned projects, the creator decided to hedge his bets. Knowing of Davis' love for Edgar Rice Burroughs' John Carter of Mars (whose rights are held by Dark Horse Comics), Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras suggested a project based on Killraven, Marvel's 1970s "War of the Worlds" character. Davis agreed and started plotting a three-part "What If?"-type story, using the initial Martian invasion as his starting point. By the time that contract was ready, he had a definite start date on *The Nail*.

"I figured I'd work on both and alternate issues," he explains. Sounds good—except he fell ill for the first two months of 1997, and his calculated plans fell apart. "Marvel was very nice about giving me more time, even though I'd signed a contract," he says. "But I realized that with the delays, nothing would be appearing until 1998. I figured I'd better get something into print."

Knowing Marvel needed a *Fantastic Four* penciler, Davis volunteered for three issues. Of course, that didn't work smoothly, either. "The first issue was double-sized," he laughs. "So now I'm another month behind what I'd figured on!"

Killraven will fall even further behind now with his new six-month X-Men commitment, thanks to the decade-long cajoling by Claremont, Marvel's new editorial director. "My thinking is that, after having written and penciled so much stuff during 1997, it'll be a nice break to do only pencils," Davis explains. Details were still being worked out at press time, but he was excited about his upcoming mutant work and the other imminent projects.

"It's hard to make any real long-term plans when I'm head-down working on something major, as I am now with *The Nail*," he says. "My long vision is gone when I'm in such tight focus on a project. It's only when I step back that I can figure out what I want to do next. But I think I should be in good shape," he laughs, "as long as the industry doesn't go belly up." Indeed, this year, Davis could gain the high profile that's mostly eluded him so far. That's assuming, of course, that things work out for him as planned. If they do, it just may be a first.

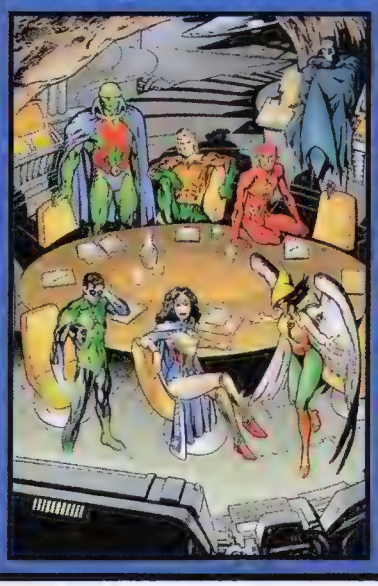
Craig Shutt, Wizard*'s quirky Chicago-based freelancer, planned to be in charge of DC Comics by now, but things happened. And he can't get his hands on the negatives.*

CLANDESTINE

ClanDestine which solidified Davis' reputation for telling strong adventure stories with a humorous twist, focused on the Destine clan, who all had superpowers but shied away from using them publicly—except for the two teenage members. It was a critical favorite, but sales dropped off with each issue, Davis says. He left after #8 and the series was killed with #12. "I've got it plotted out up through issue #30. I did the [1996] *X-Men/ClanDestine* two-parter to tie up some loose ends, but there's lots more to tell. I've spoken to Marvel about maybe continuing it, so we'll see what happens."

JLA: THE NAIL

This summer, Davis' next big project, *JLA: The Nail*, will tell the tale of what would have happened to the DC Universe if Superman had never been created. "There are countless little bits and pieces I've thrown in, because it's my game," he says. "Any place I needed a background character, I threw in an existing character to show how I thought he'd be affected. If you're not a DC buff, the story will still be a fun, exciting yarn. But if you're a fan, you can get out your magnifying glass and figure out why things changed as they did."



Everybody thinks that trying to rule the world is easy, but it takes a lot of energy. The one useful secret my Masters of Evil beat out of Jarvis when we trashed Avengers Mansion is that milk does a body good. I can't force you to drink milk, so it's up to you to get what your body needs (well, if that wench Moonstone hadn't turned against me, my Thunderbolts and I *would* have forced you, but ach, maybe next time).
MILK
He can't force you.
Baron Zemo ™ & © Marvel Characters, Inc.; Got Milk? © 1998 National Milk Processor Promotions Board.
PARODY

'Storm Watch

'Wizard' crashes Jim Lee's pad for 24 eye-poppin' hours

9:00 a.m. Just outside WildStorm's double-secret fortress, hidden behind the facade of an innocent-looking San Diego office building, the marathon begins! Note the official *Wizard* Attack Team Survival Kit:

BACKPACK: Contains bologna sandwich, Swiss army knife, toothbrush, pens, notebook, Vivarin, crash helmet, sledgehammer.

BARBIE® SLEEPING BAG: Don't ask.

JIM LEE'S ROBE: Stolen from the 1996 San Diego Comic Con, just to rub it in.

THERMOS: Filled with hot, steaming coffee, the elixir of life.

MONKEY SLIPPERS: For warmth and comfort. And damn fashionable!

"GOIN' TO GRANDMA'S" OVERNIGHT BAG: Contains clean underwear, magazines, signal flares, quarter to call home, much-needed deodorant.

BY "Caffeine-Crazed" Jim McLauchlin
PHOTOS BY "Marathon Man" Paul Schiraldi

The legends say that hard-working bakers stay up all night just so you can have fresh bread, donuts and pie (mmmm...pie) in the morning. Those legends are true. And believe it or not, the same holds for... comics?

Yep. While you're busy catching 40 winks of much-needed beauty sleep, waiting for your Batman alarm clock to rouse you from your dreams of being dominated by She-Hulk, the folks at Jim Lee's WildStorm Productions are making sure that bakery-fresh comics arrive in your favorite store each and every Wednesday.

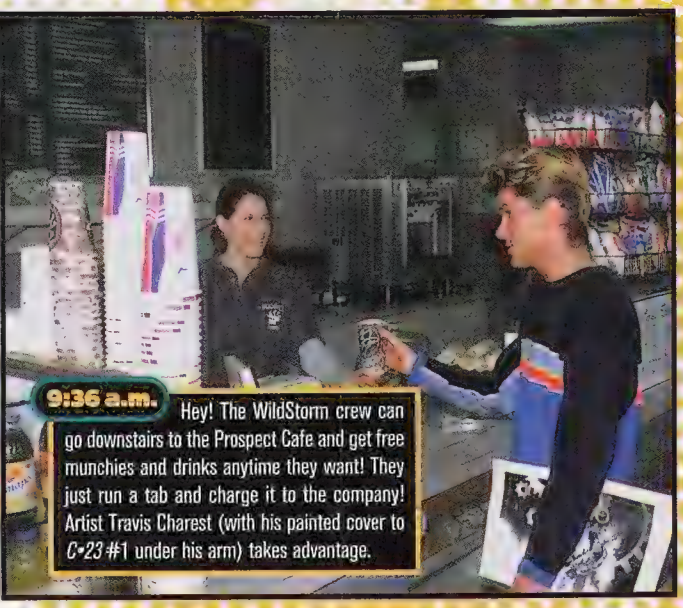
WildStorm actually—really and truly—runs non-stop! The company works three eight-hour shifts so that coloring and production can be done around the clock. The people there are pretty proud of that. And get this, they think the *Wizard* crew could never hold to such a standard.

Silly boys.

Well, our crack *Wizard* staff ain't one to back down from a challenge. So who'd they pick to represent the wild and woolly *Wizard* bunch? Yep, me—Jim McLauchlin, Boy Journalist. Armed with only an iron will, a bladder capable of holding a gallon of coffee and a photographer every bit as foolish as me, I set out to chronicle a full day in the life of WildStorm. Having just written this intro, there are now 23 hours, 55 minutes to go. We'll see what happens...

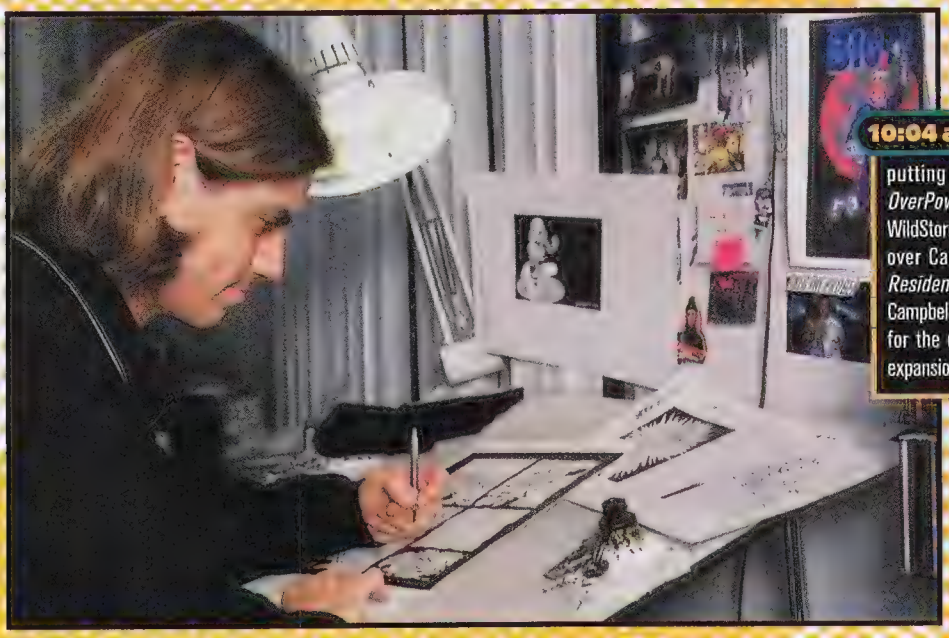
9:01 a.m. For some reason, you've always gotta sign in at these places. I show off my teddy bear as receptionist Tracey Chadwick calls to verify my ID.

9:05 a.m. Time to work! *Desperadoes* writer Jeff Mariotte shows up, looking like he's been spending way too much time...uh, *researching* his Western title.

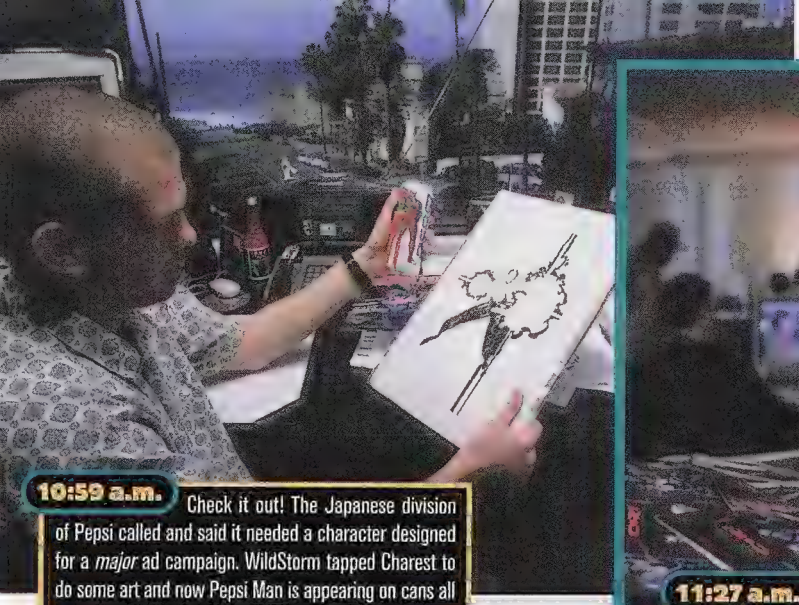


9:36 a.m. Hey! The WildStorm crew can go downstairs to the Prospect Cafe and get free munchies and drinks anytime they want! They just run a tab and charge it to the company! Artist Travis Charest (with his painted cover to *C•23* #1 under his arm) takes advantage.

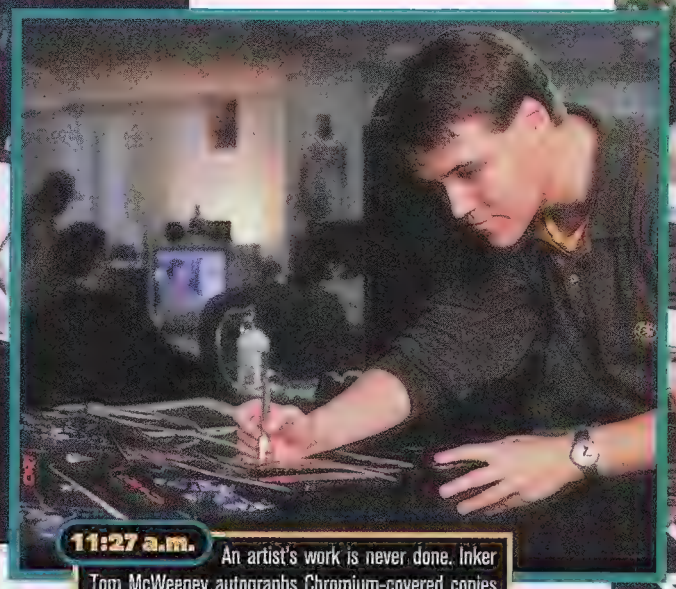
9:38 a.m. Hearing there's free java downstairs (and knowing I'll need it), I truck down and talk to Charest. He gives me some painting pointers.



10:04 a.m. WildStorm is now putting together art for Marvel's *OverPower* card game. Mark Irwin, WildStorm's trading card director, inks over Carlos D'Anda's pencils for a *Resident Evil* comic, while J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner's Fairchild art for the upcoming *Image OverPower* expansion set waits its turn.

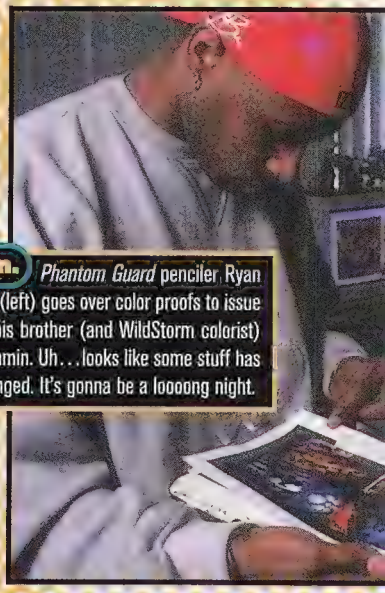


10:59 a.m. Check it out! The Japanese division of Pepsi called and said it needed a character designed for a *major* ad campaign. WildStorm tapped Charest to do some art and now Pepsi Man is appearing on cans all over Japan! Kris Oprisko, WildStorm's director of creative solutions, compares the can to Charest's original.



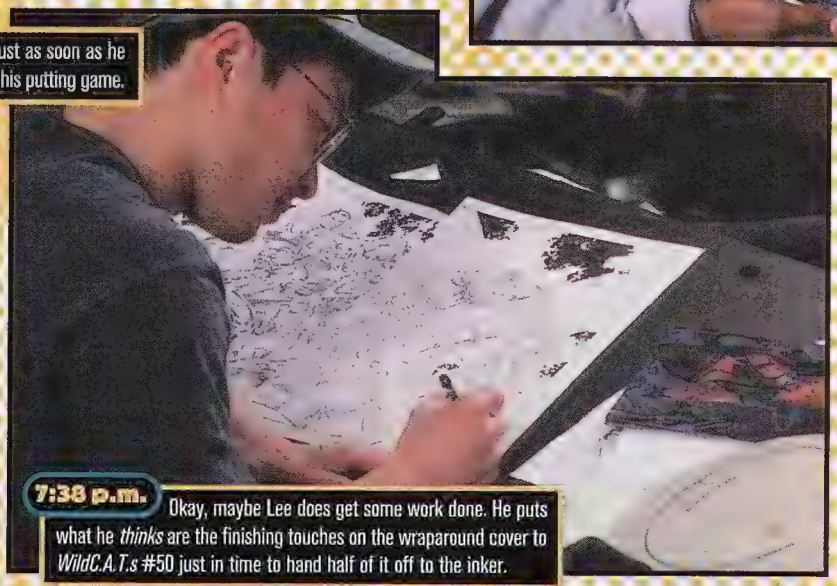
11:27 a.m. An artist's work is never done. Inker Tom McWeeney autographs Chromium-covered copies of *WildCORE* #1 for a retail giveaway.

3:01 p.m. Sandra Hope inks a page of Humberto Ramos' *Crimson* in a room with a view.



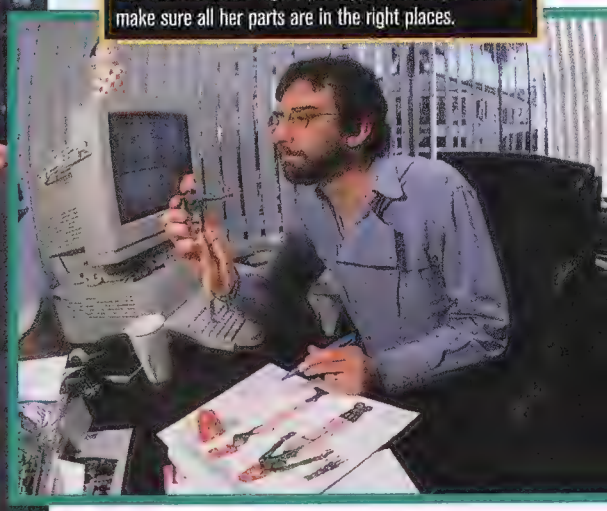
4:38 p.m. *Phantom Guard* penciler Ryan Benjamin (left) goes over color proofs to issue #5 with his brother (and WildStorm colorist) Joel Benjamin. Uh...looks like some stuff has to be changed. It's gonna be a loooong night.

6:29 p.m. ...just as soon as he finishes improving his putting game.

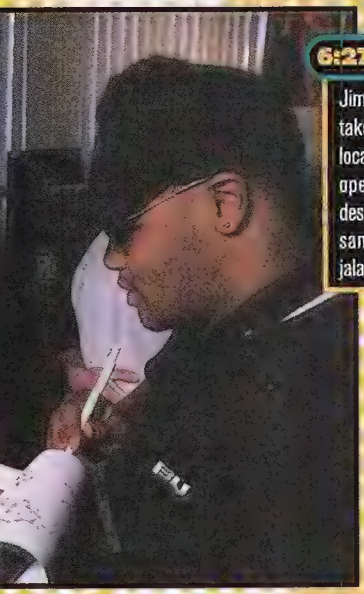


7:38 p.m. Okay, maybe Lee does get some work done. He puts what he *thinks* are the finishing touches on the wraparound cover to *WildC.A.T.s* #50 just in time to hand half of it off to the inker.

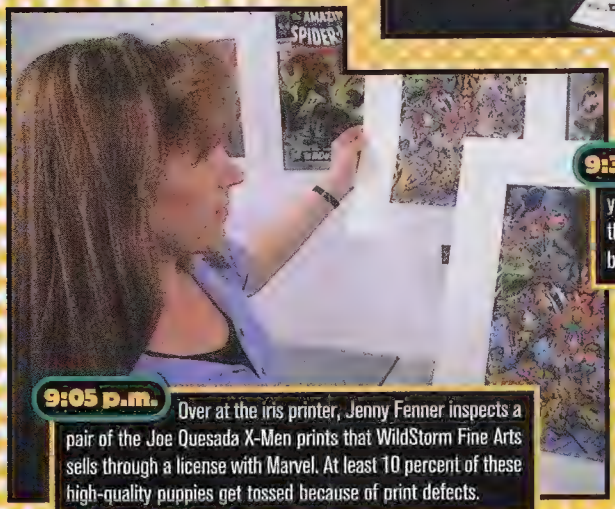
1:27 p.m. After lunch, the *Danger Girl* team of Andy Hartnell (left) and Campbell go over color proofs of *Danger Girl* #1 and the plot for #2.



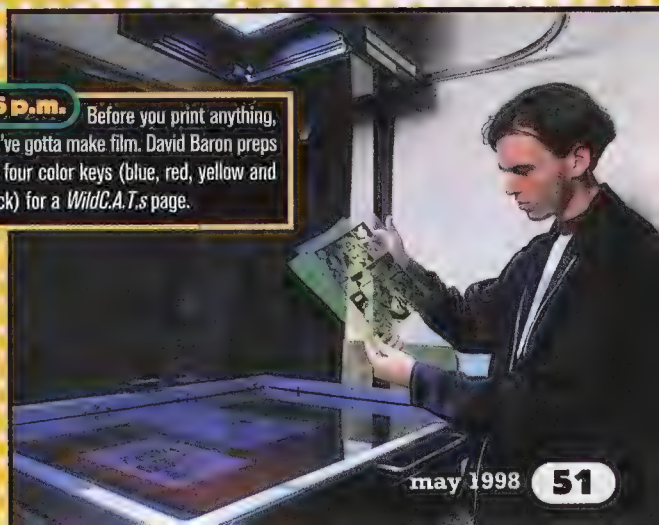
2:29 p.m. Gotta sweat the details! Mariotte, who doubles as WildStorm's big marketing kahuna, compares the Fairchild action figure prototype to the style sheet to make sure all her parts are in the right places.



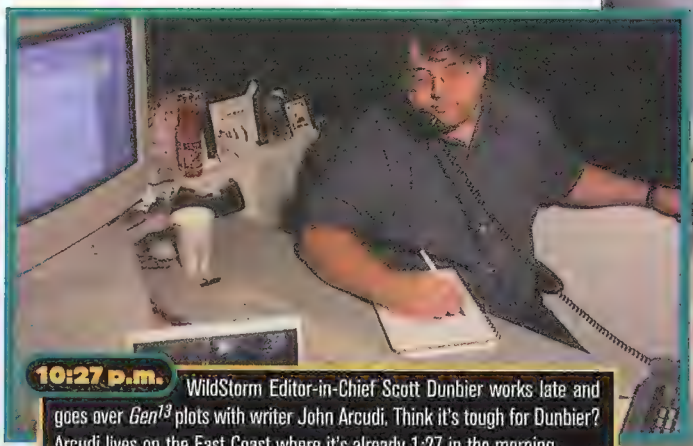
6:27 p.m. It's good to be the boss! Jim Lee finally shows up for work with a takeout bag from the Girurd Gourmet, located just around the corner. (Note the open issue of *ahem* *Wizard* on his desk.) He's gonna cannonball a roast beef sandwich with everything and some jalapeño-flavored potato chips…



9:05 p.m. Over at the iris printer, Jenny Fenner inspects a pair of the Joe Quesada X-Men prints that WildStorm Fine Arts sells through a license with Marvel. At least 10 percent of these high-quality puppies get tossed because of print defects.

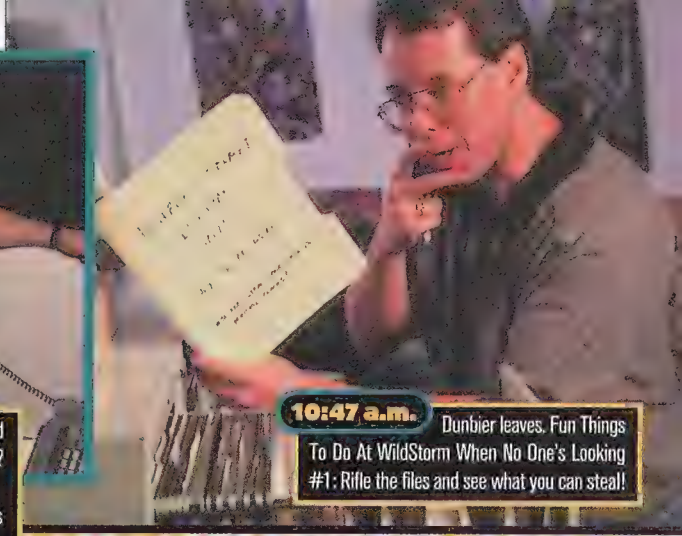


9:36 p.m. Before you print anything, you've gotta make film. David Baron preps the four color keys (blue, red, yellow and black) for a *WildC.A.T.s* page.



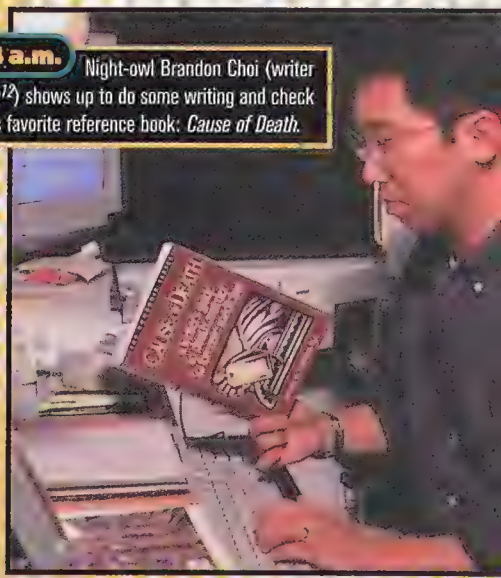
10:27 p.m. WildStorm Editor-in-Chief Scott Dunbier works late and goes over *Gen13* plots with writer John Arcudi. Think it's tough for Dunbier? Arcudi lives on the East Coast where it's already 1:27 in the morning.

(Speaking of lateness of hour, I notice photographer Paul Schiraldi is staring to get punchy. And I'm starting to get surly.)

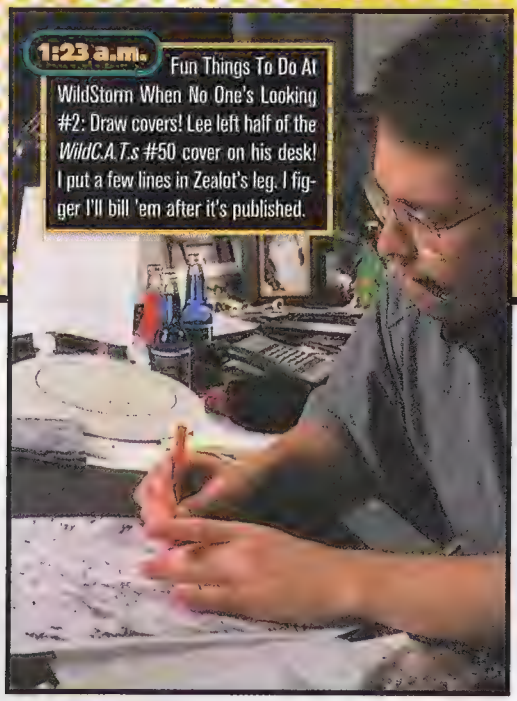


10:47 a.m. Dunbier leaves. Fun Things To Do At WildStorm When No One's Looking #1: Rifle the files and see what you can steal!

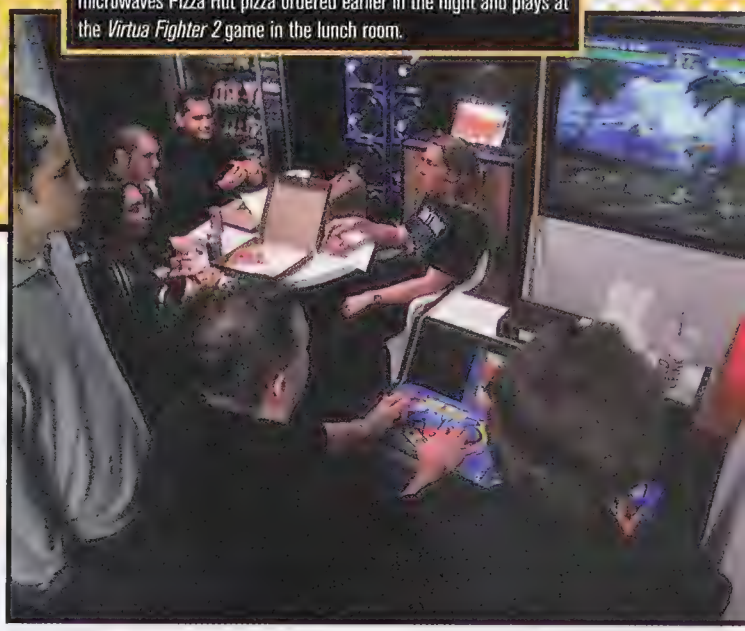
Straight-up Midnight Check it out! It's the witching hour and nine guys are still hard at work in the coloring department! Jolt Cola seems to be the order of the day, and tonight, the Jerky Boys rule the CD player.



12:44 a.m. Night-owl Brandon Choi (writer of *Gen13*) shows up to do some writing and check out his favorite reference book: *Cause of Death*.



1:23 a.m. Fun Things To Do At WildStorm When No One's Looking #2: Draw covers! Lee left half of the *WildC.A.T.s* #50 cover on his desk! I put a few lines in Zealot's leg. I figger I'll bill 'em after it's published.



2:00 a.m. Lunch break...at 2:00 a.m.? Yep. The overnight crew microwaves Pizza Hut pizza ordered earlier in the night and plays at the *Virtua Fighter 2* game in the lunch room.

A world in crisis

A genocidal war

A man betrayed

On a planet torn by elemental forces, Corbin's existence is defined by war.

But his greatest enemy lies beyond his reach – within himself.

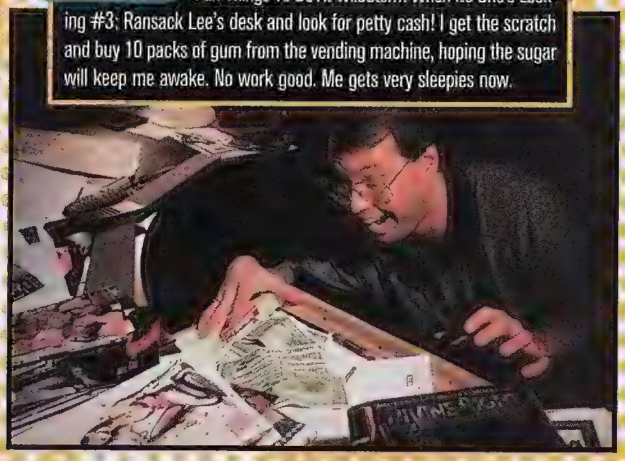
The C•23 trading card game combines comic book action with dark intrigue to bring you a game unlike any other. The game is fast to learn and loaded with strategy for beginners and TCG veterans alike. Feel the rush of high-impact gameplay combined with a brilliant storyline, created alongside the C•23 comic series from Jim Lee's WildStorm Productions.

The game demonstration is online now at:
www.wizards.com/C23
Get the game and comic book now at local stores.

Customer Service: (206) 624-0933

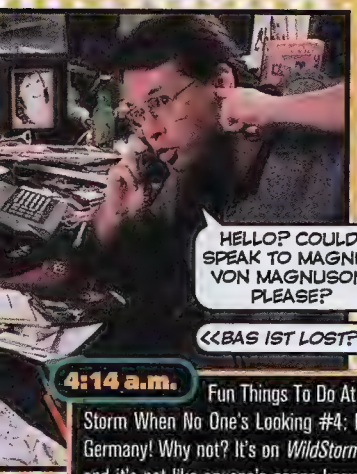
Play the game. Read the comic. Unlock the secrets of C•23.

2:59 a.m. Fun Things To Do At WildStorm When No One's Looking #3: Ransack Lee's desk and look for petty cash! I get the scratch and buy 10 packs of gum from the vending machine, hoping the sugar will keep me awake. No work good. Me gets very sleepies now.



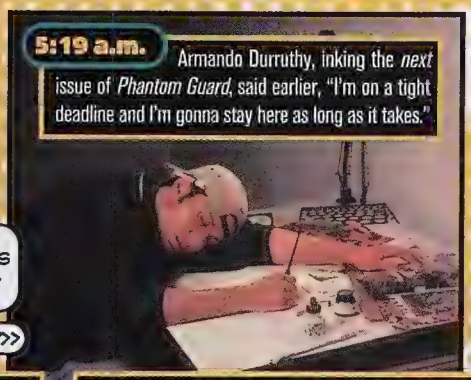
3:41 a.m. Screw it. He's only mortal. Photographer Paul Schiraldi grabs a nap.

PHOTO BY JIM McLAUCHLIN. COOL. NOW *WIZARD* OWES ME $25 FOR PRINTING MY PHOTO.



4:14 a.m. Fun Things To Do At WildStorm When No One's Looking #4: Phone Germany! Why not? It's on *WildStorm's* bill and it's not like anyone's gonna know. And like I care about the time difference.

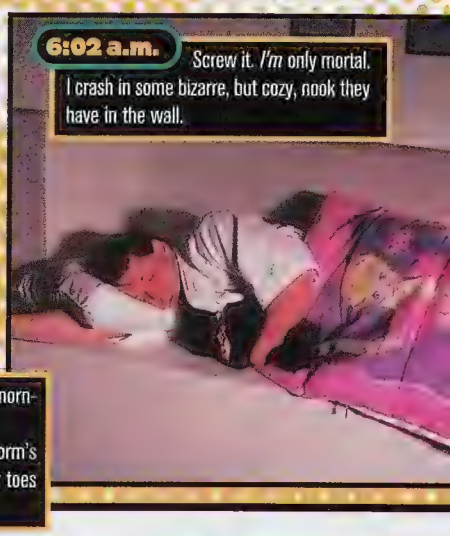
5:19 a.m. Armando Durruthy, inking the *next* issue of *Phantom Guard*, said earlier, "I'm on a tight deadline and I'm gonna stay here as long as it takes."

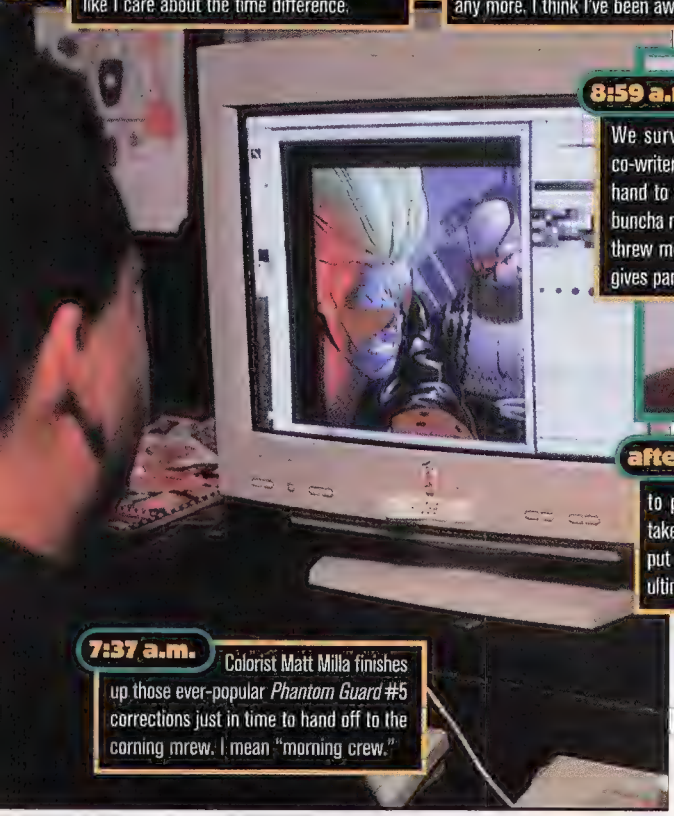


He finally crashes and burns after five in the blessed morning. I know how he feels.

By the way, is *Phantom Guard* the only book WildStorm's doing any more? I can't remember. And I can't feel my toes any more. I think I've been awake too long.

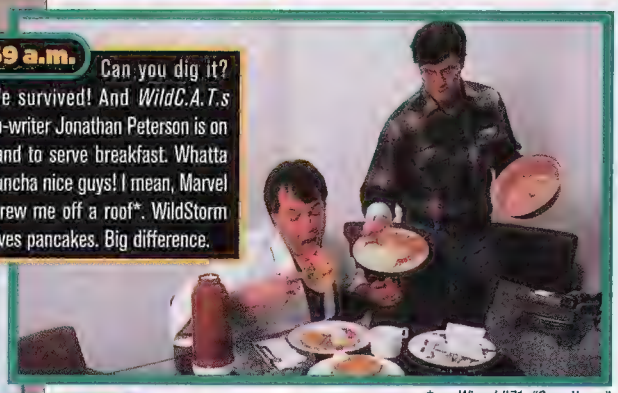
6:02 a.m. Screw it. *I'm* only mortal. I crash in some bizarre, but cozy, nook they have in the wall.





7:37 a.m. Colorist Matt Milla finishes up those ever-popular *Phantom Guard* #5 corrections just in time to hand off to the corning mrew. I mean "morning crew."

8:59 a.m. Can you dig it? We survived! And *WildC.A.T.s* co-writer Jonathan Peterson is on hand to serve breakfast. Whatta buncha nice guys! I mean, Marvel threw me off a roof*. WildStorm gives pancakes. Big difference.



*see *Wizard* #71: "Open House"

afterword So hey, next Wednesday when you drop by your local comic shop to pick up yer copy of *Divine Right: The Adventures of Max Faraday*, take a sec and nod in the direction of San Diego. A lot of hard-workin' folk there put in a lot of odd hours to get that four-color funnybook in your hands. And ultimately, I think they'd agree that it was all worth it.

Upon completing this assignment, a sleep-deprived and blithering Jim McLauchlin was remanded to the custody of the San Diego County Center for the Mildly Insane and Generally Pretty Darnn Stupid.

Upon completing this assignment, a very tired Paul Schiraldi went to sleep. Last we heard, he was still sleepin'. His wife really hopes he wakes up soon. The gutters need cleaning.

this summer

WIZARD®

presents

Comics are Cool!

A **THREE-PART MEGA-FEATURE** IN
***WIZARD: THE COMICS MAGAZINE* #83, 84** AND **85.**

PART 1
CHARACTERS
#83 IN JUNE

PART 2
CREATORS
#84 IN JULY

PART 3
THE REAL WORLD
#85 IN AUGUST

PREACHER meet POPE PIE-US

CASSIDY and ARSEFACE

MASADA, WHERE A SINISTER PLOT IS TAKING SHAPE...

ALLFATHER D'ARONIQUE— WE'VE HIJACKED ANOTHER SHIPMENT OF HOLY GHOSTESS PIES, AS YOU ORDERED!

GOOD, GOOD. MUST HAVE ALL THE PIE, ALL THE PIE.

WITHOUT PIE, THE MASSES WILL DESPAIR AND MORE EASILY ACCEPT THEIR REBORN SAVIOR!

CHERRY CHOCOLATE HUMPER DUMPER DI DO!

NEARBY...

♫ BUH BUH MUHHUH— MUH CUH PUH! ♪*

JAYSIS!

JESSE, REMIND ME WHY WE'RE DOIN' THIS...

THREE MAGIC WORDS, CASS: "LUCRATIVE PRODUCT ENDORSEMENT."

BESIDES, THE KID HERE REALLY LOVES PIE!

* "BYE, BYE, MISS AMERICAN PIE!"

SOON...

OKAY, FATS-- WE'RE HERE TO CUT A SLICE OUT OF YOUR SCHEME!

RUMPER PUMPER DUMPER PIE!

CUSTER! YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS CAN'T HAVE MY GOLDEN, FLAKY CRUST—MY JUICY FILLING...

D'ARONIQUE--

SHUT YOUR PIE HOLE!

HUH DUH GUH DUH DUH UH SHUH LUH PUH! *

JAYSIS--I CAN'T TELL IF IT'S COMIN' OR GOIN'! I'M GONNA BE ILL...

AND FOLKS COMPLAIN ABOUT SECOND-HAND SMOKE!

NO WONDER GOD UP AND LEFT US!

* HOT DIGGETY DOG, I SURE LOVE PIE!

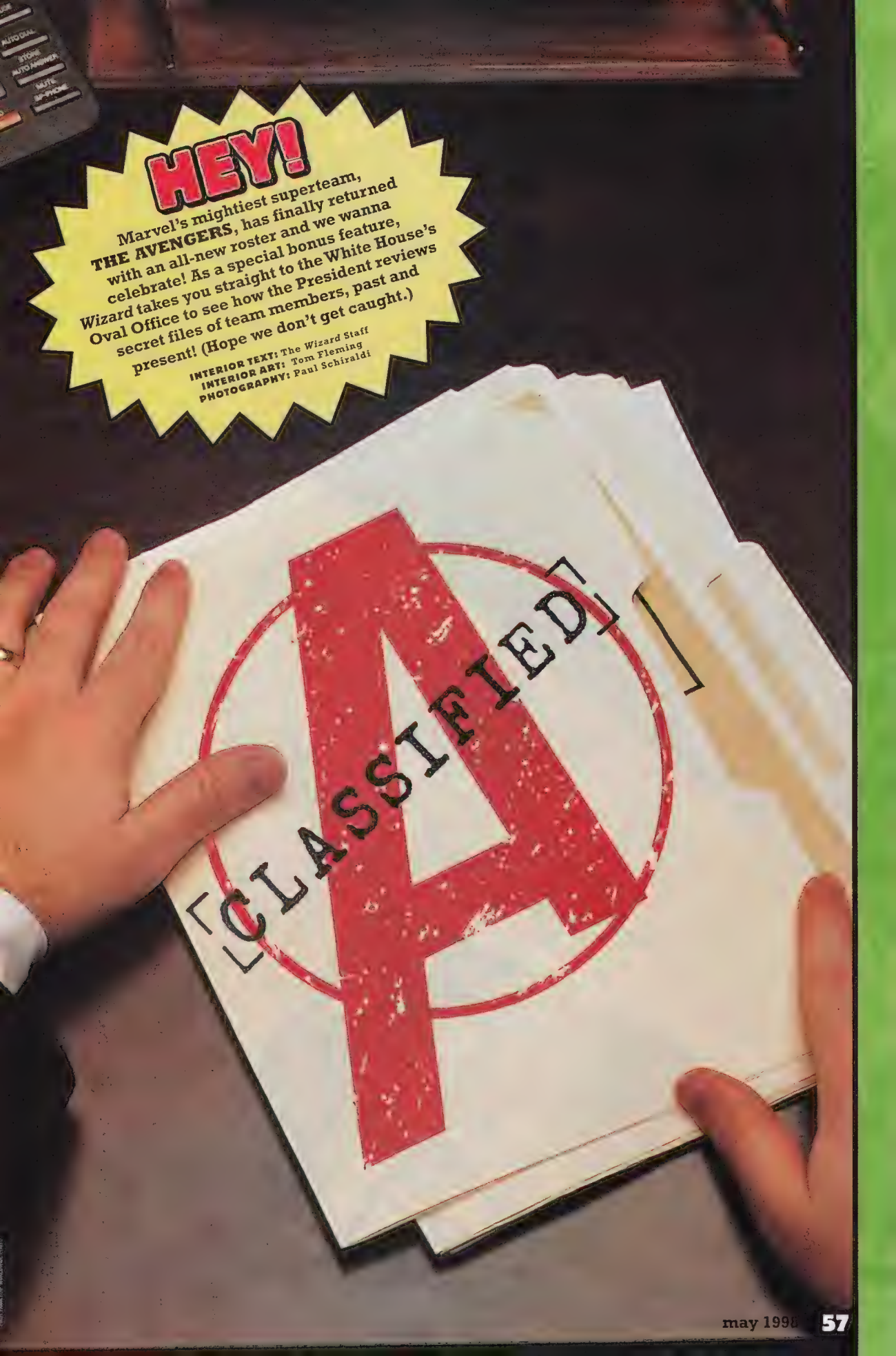
HOLY GHOSTESS® PIES-- THEY'RE SINFULLY DELICIOUS!

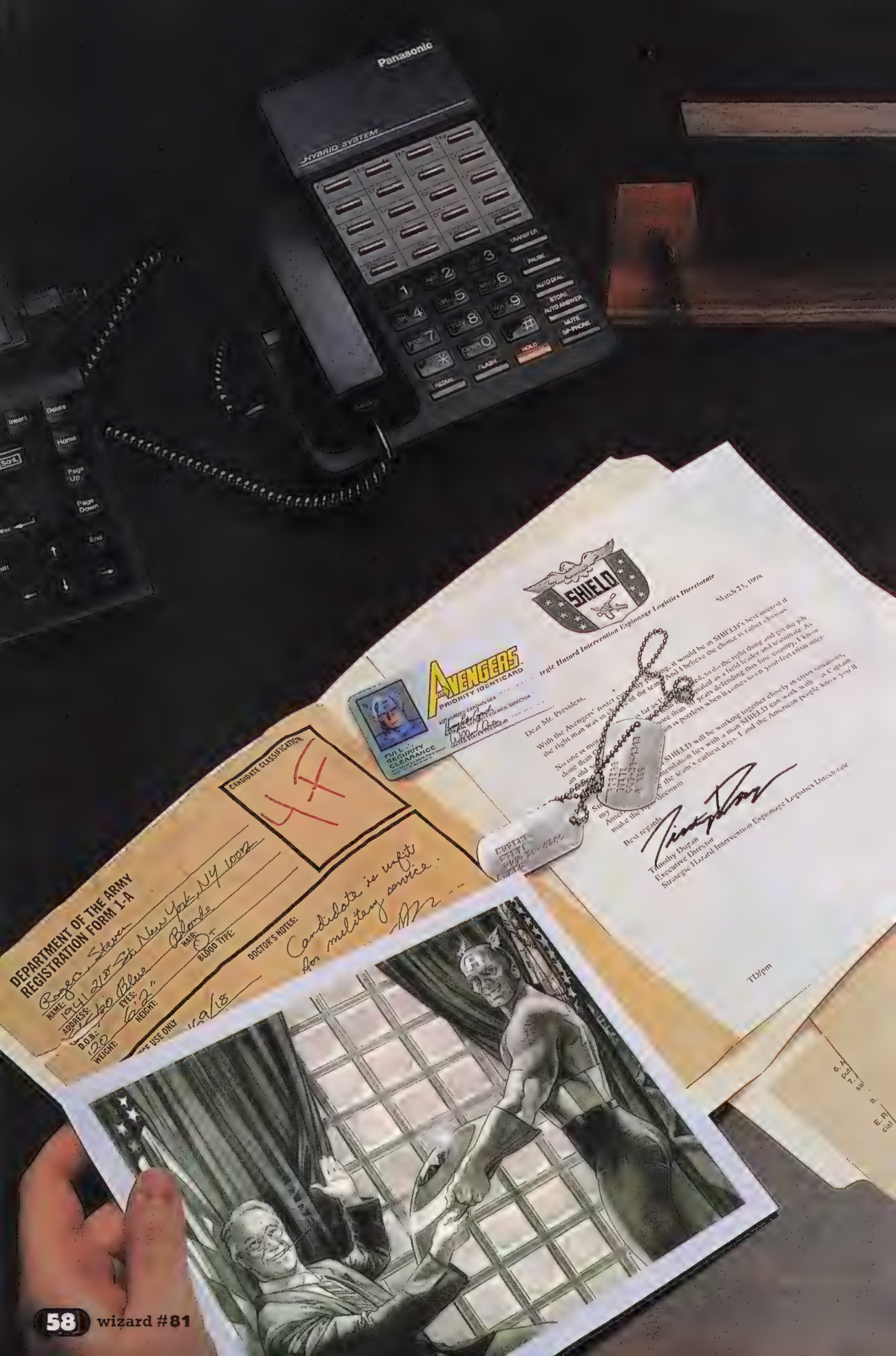
THANKS TO GARTH AND STEVE FOR THE INDULGENCE!

HEY!

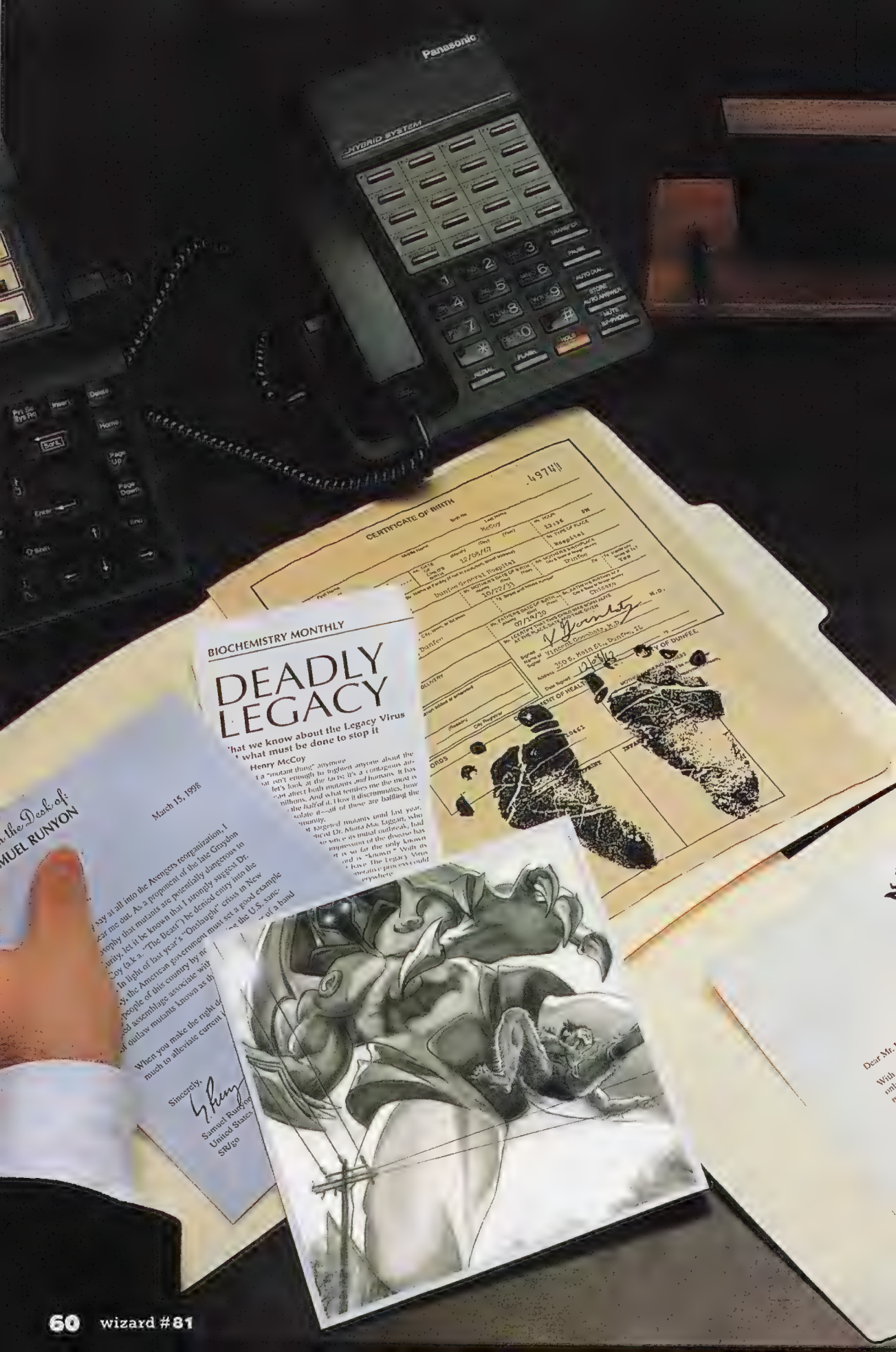
Marvel's mightiest superteam, **THE AVENGERS**, has finally returned with an all-new roster and we wanna celebrate! As a special bonus feature, Wizard takes you straight to the White House's Oval Office to see how the President reviews secret files of team members, past and present! (Hope we don't get caught.)

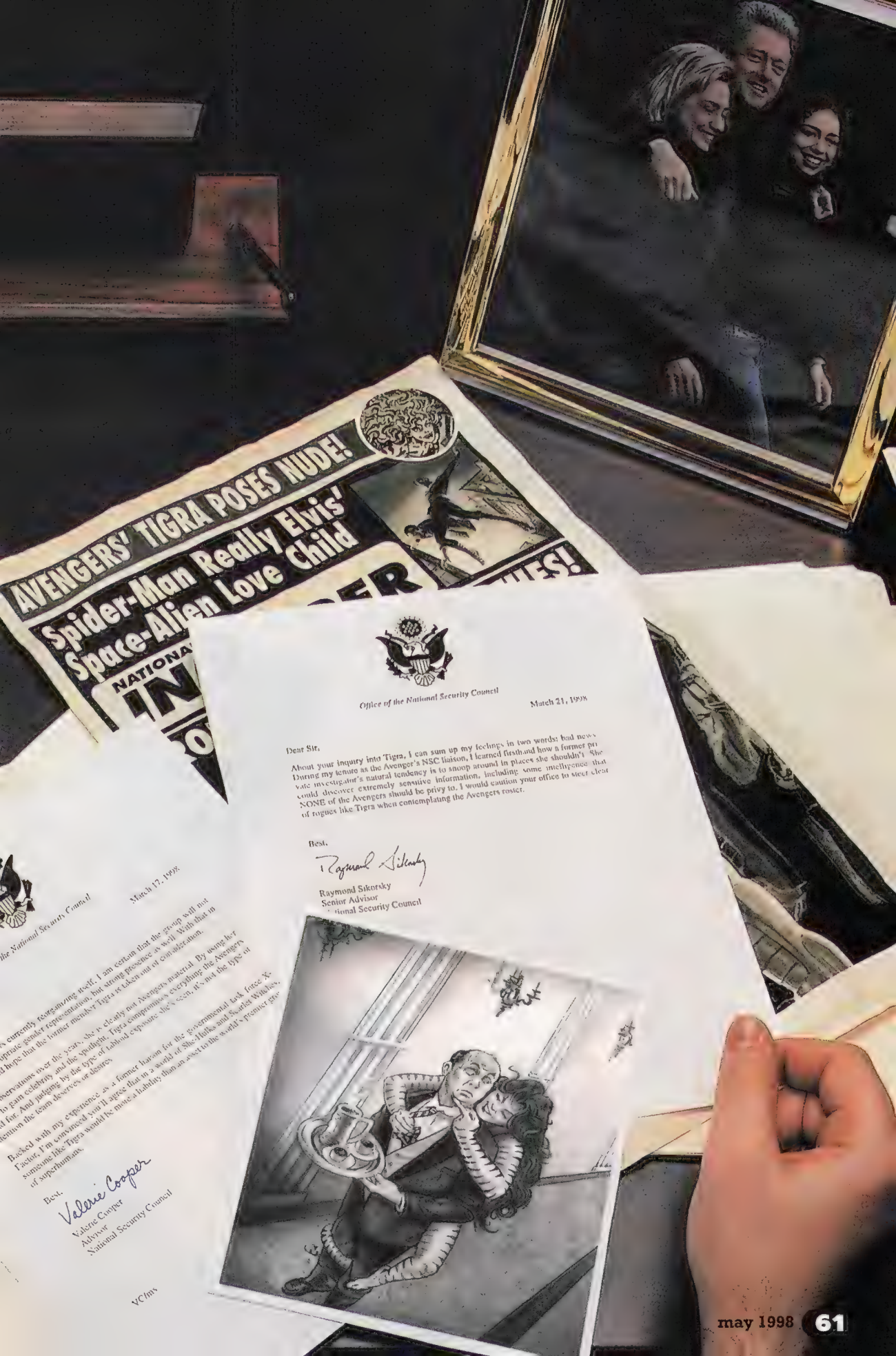
INTERIOR TEXT: The Wizard Staff
INTERIOR ART: Tom Fleming
PHOTOGRAPHY: Paul Schiraldi

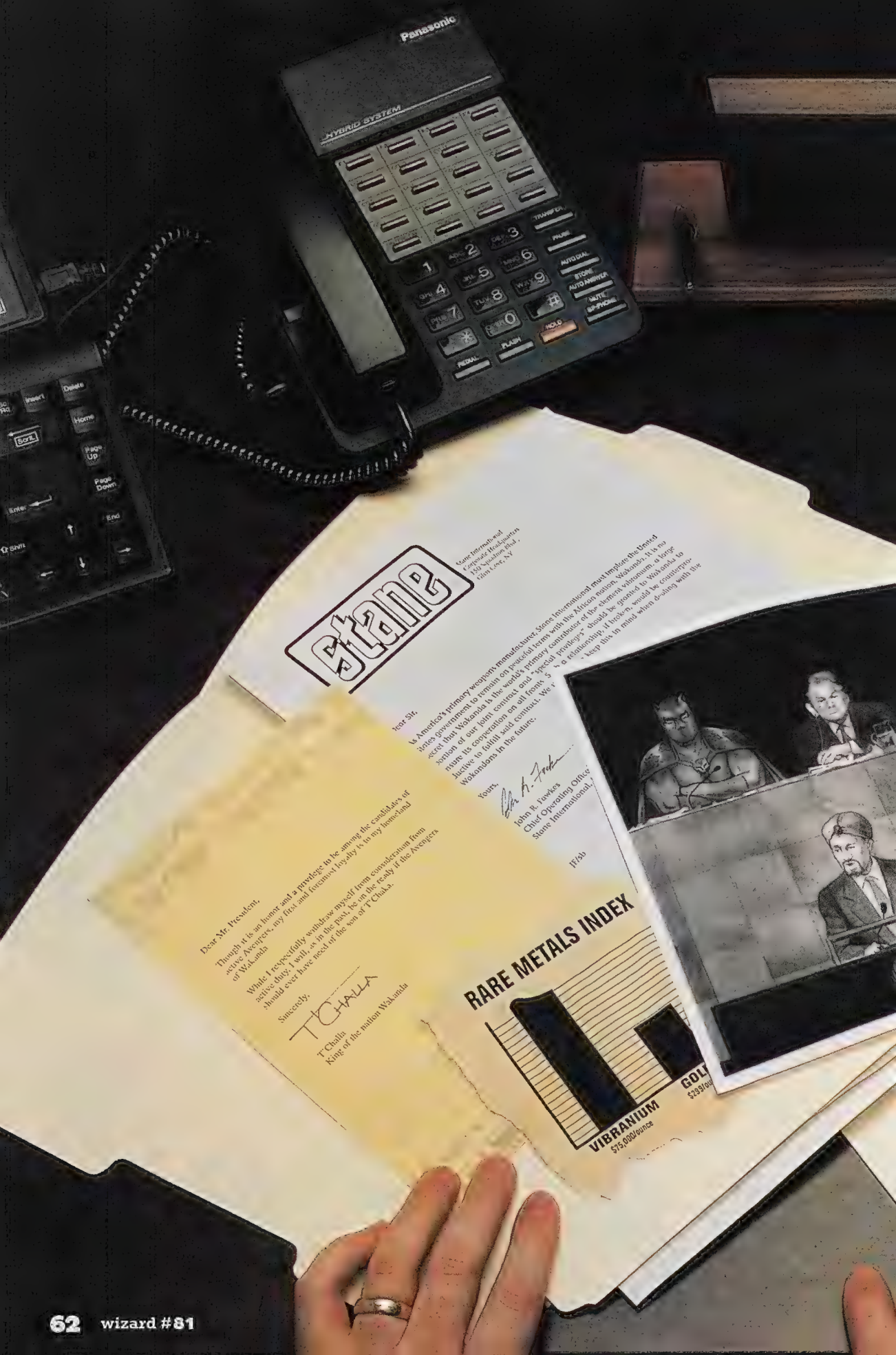


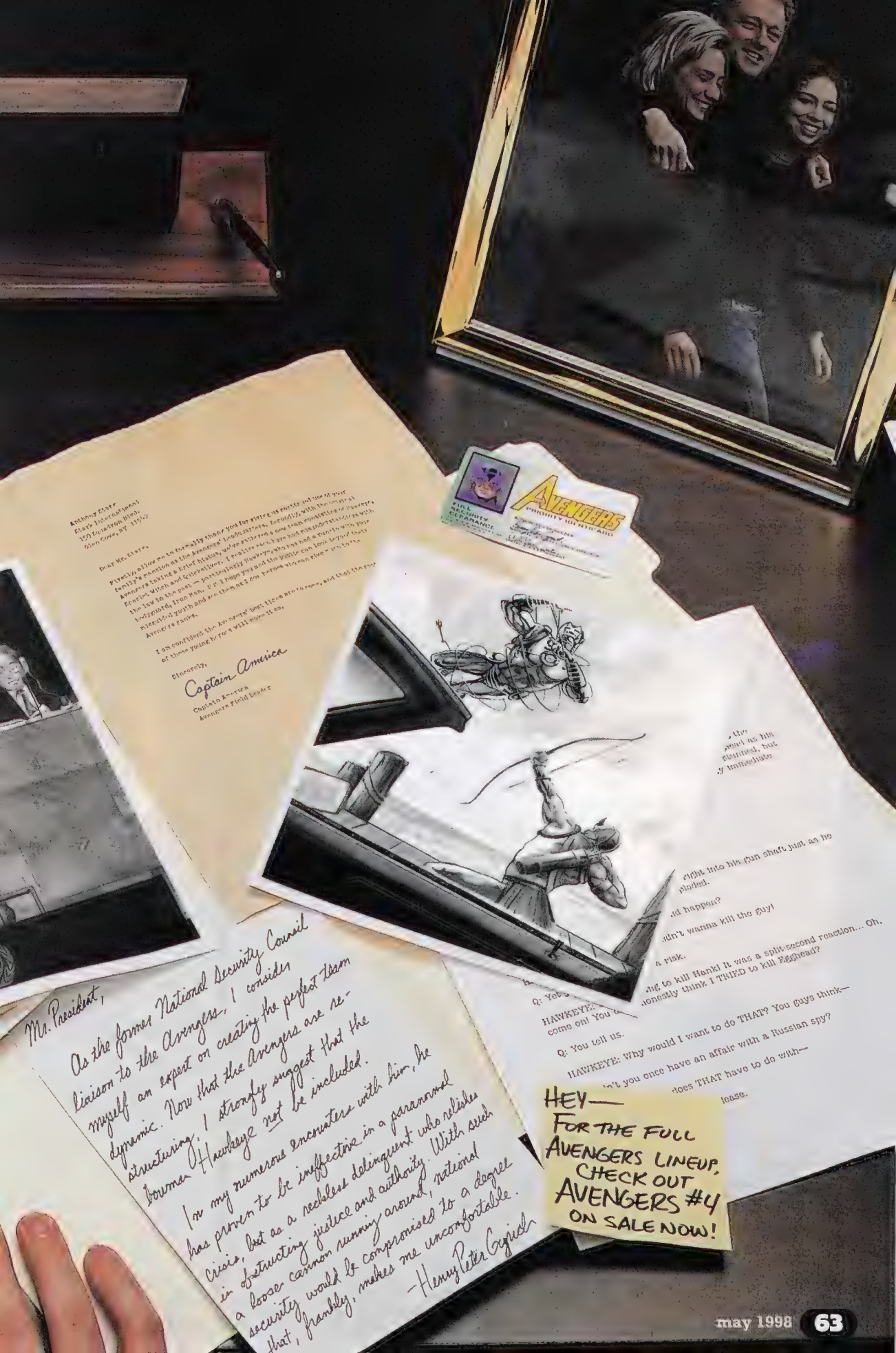

Panasonic
HYBRID SYSTEM
SHIELD
Strategic Hazard Intervention Espionage Logistics Directorate
March 23, 1998
Dear Mr. President,
Best regards,
Timothy Duran
Executive Director
Strategic Hazard Intervention Espionage Logistics Directorate
TD/jrm
AVENGERS
PRIORITY IDENTICARD
FULL SECURITY CLEARANCE
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
REGISTRATION FORM 1-A
CANDIDATE CLASSIFICATION:
4F
NAME:
ADDRESS:
D.O.B.:
WEIGHT:
EYES:
HEIGHT:
HAIR:
BLOOD TYPE:
DOCTOR'S NOTES:
Candidate is unfit for military service.

Department of the Air Force
Dear Mr. President,
Warmest regards,
Thaddeus E. Ross
Lieutenant General
United States Air For
VENGERS CHARTER
AVENGERS
PRIORITY IDENTICARD
FULL SECURITY CLEARANCE
ARTICLE ONE: ORGA
ARTICLE TWO: JURISDICTION
ARTICLE THREE: FUNDING
ARTICLE FOUR: OPERATIONS
AVENGERS BY-LAW
POLICY & OPERATIONS
Nay! The Odinson travels when he pleases!
I'm Man—
Seeing this makes me wary. I think we need to talk to this guy.
—Ant-Man
Bah!
Ant thou mad??

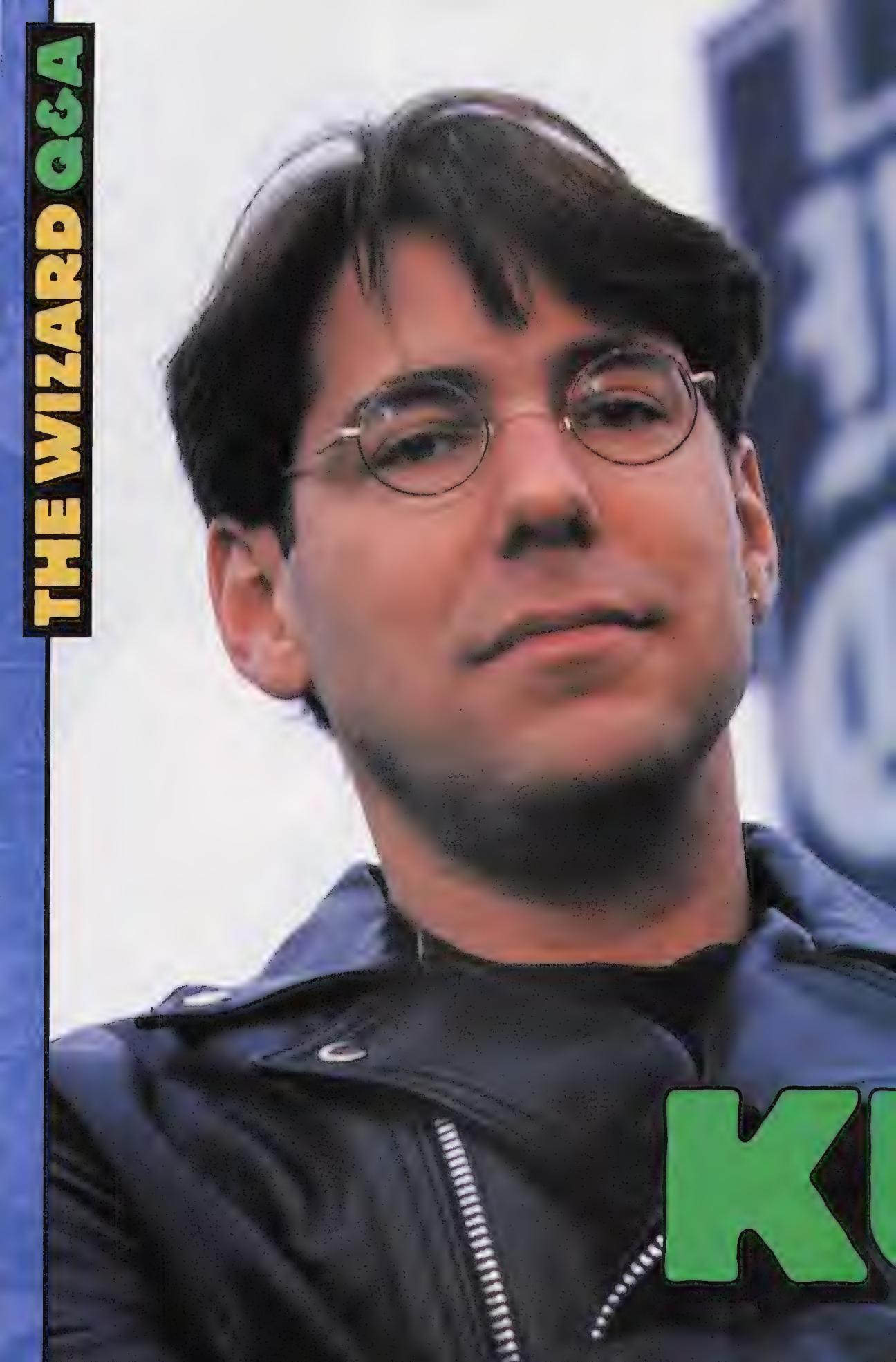

Panasonic
HYBRID SYSTEM
CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH
BIOCHEMISTRY MONTHLY
DEADLY LEGACY
March 15, 1998
Sincerely,


AVENGERS' TIGRA POSES NUDE!
Spider-Man Really Elvis'
Space-Alien Love Child
NATIONA
Office of the National Security Council
March 21, 1998
Dear Sir,
About your inquiry into Tigra, I can sum up my feelings in two words: bad news.
During my tenure as the Avenger's NSC liaison, I learned firsthand how a former pri
vate investigator's natural tendency is to snoop around in places she shouldn't. She
could discover extremely sensitive information, including some intelligence that
NONE of the Avengers should be privy to. I would caution your office to steer clear
of rogues like Tigra when contemplating the Avengers roster.
Best,
Raymond Sikorsky
Senior Advisor
National Security Council
March 17, 1998
Best,
Valerie Cooper
Valerie Cooper
Advisor
National Security Council
VC/mw


Panasonic
HYBRID SYSTEM
Stane
Dear Mr. President,
Though it is an honor and a privilege to be among the candidates of active Avengers, my first and foremost loyalty is to my homeland of Wakanda
While I respectfully withdraw myself from consideration from active duty, I will, as in the past, be on the ready if the Avengers should ever have need of the son of T'Chaka.
Sincerely,
T'Challa
King of the nation Wakanda
Yours,
John R. Fowkes
Chief Operating Office
Stane International,
RARE METALS INDEX
VIBRANIUM
$75,000/ounce


Anthony Stark
Stark International
150 Squadron Blvd.
Glen Cove, NY 11542
Dear Mr. Stark,
Firstly, allow me to formally thank you for giving us exclusive use of your family's mansion as the Avengers' headquarters. Secondly, with the original Avengers taking a brief hiatus, we've gathered a new team consisting of Hawkeye, Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver. I realize each have had misunderstanding with the law in the past — particularly Hawkeye, who has had a run-in with your bodyguard, Iron Man. But I hope you and the public can look beyond their misguided youth and see them as I do: heroes who can give — and to the Avengers ranks.
I am confident the Avengers' best times are to come, and that the rise of these young heroes will make it so.
Sincerely,
Captain America
Captain America
Avengers Field Leader
AVENGERS
PRIORITY IDENTICARD
FULL SECURITY CLEARANCE
Mr. President,
As the former National Security Council liaison to the Avengers, I consider myself an expert on creating the perfect team dynamic. Now that the Avengers are restructuring, I strongly suggest that the bowman Hawkeye not be included.
In my numerous encounters with him, he has proven to be ineffective in a paranormal crisis, but as a reckless delinquent who relishes in obstructing justice and authority. With such a loose cannon running around, national security would be compromised to a degree that, frankly, makes me uncomfortable.
—Henry Peter Gyrich
right into his gun shaft just as he
ploded.
id happen?
dn't wanna kill the guy!
a risk.
ng to kill Hank! It was a split-second reaction... Oh,
honestly think I TRIED to kill Egghead?
Q: You tell us.
HAWKEYE: Why would I want to do THAT? You guys think—
n't you once have an affair with a Russian spy?
does THAT have to do with—
lease.
HEY—
FOR THE FULL AVENGERS LINEUP, CHECK OUT AVENGERS #4 ON SALE NOW!

THE WIZARD Q&A



In between bites of burgers, 'Hulk' artist Adam Kubert reveals what the future holds for the green goliath, secrets about his famous comic family and why he left 'Wolverine'

Adam Kubert has a craving.

After a long day of penciling *Incredible Hulk*, the mild-mannered Kubert needs a release. Renowned for his dynamic, raw, untamed art style, Kubert pores over his drawing table up to 14 hours a day. When his creativity is spent, there's only place to go to satisfy his need, his craving.

And that place is...White Castle?

So what the heck's a guy who drives a BMW doing chomping on 53-cent burgers with five holes punched in them?

"I love 'em," he says, lifting up his burger bun and removing his pickles. "I grew up on White Castles. My dad grew up on White Castles. It's a snack like no other. I even had them served at my wedding reception, which a lot of people thought was strange. But I didn't care."

To Kubert, White Castle is home turf—a place he feels comfortable. He shows up to be interviewed with a big smile on his face, but a nervous twitch in his step. You see, Adam Kubert has a cool confidence about his work, but is cautious about what he says. He collects himself and thinks about a question, repeating it in his mind, before he responds. Invoking his dad, he says, "My father told me that you're never sorry for something you didn't say."

And Kubert has learned much from his father—the legendary comic artist of the '50s and '60s who eventually opened the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art, where Adam and his younger brother Andy trained. That training paid off for Adam with stints on *Spirits of Vengeance* and *Wolverine*, which he has parlayed into his current gig on *Hulk*.

So we interview over lunch at White Castle, the famous 24-hour fast-food chain that dots the Eastern half of the U.S. It's a place Kubert can feel comfortable in, where he can open up amid the smell of onions and the patter of mildly crazy people seeking the world's cheapest fast food. And as we eat, we keep careful track of how many burgers each of us downs.

'Cause the deal is, loser buys.

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN • PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

ADAM KUBERT

WIZARD: Adam, of all the places on Earth where we could interview a comic artist, why are we at White Castle?

ADAM: White Castle enhances the artist's creativity. You have a couple of these burgers and you want to go and just draw your ass off [*Chuckles*].

What's your typical Castle menu? Do you stick to burgers, or go for the cheese sticks?

I usually get five cheeseburgers and one fish sandwich loaded with the hot sauce. It's delicious. I get an order of fries and usually a Coke. Once I go through those, I usually get some to bring home and have later.

Ever try the fried clams?

No, I'm more a traditionalist.

So what's the allure of the Castle?

The allure of the Castle for me is in the flavor of the people that come here. If you need background people in your story, come to a White Castle at 2:00 in the morning.

Okay, you've been on *Incredible Hulk* for a year. It looks like your style has changed since *Wolverine*. Is this something you've done consciously?

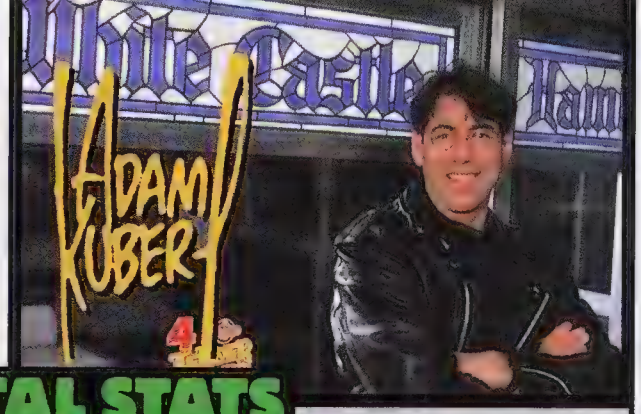
I started *Hulk* with #454. On that issue, I was still in my old *Wolverine* style of doing layouts that were a little crazy, ones that were not a [traditional] grid. The next issue was *Hulk* Minus 1, the "Flashback" issue. They forced all the artists, myself included, to work within a grid to reflect the "old" "Flashback" feel. I liked that approach. Since then, I've been continuing the approach of straightforward layouts and concentrating on what's going on *inside* the panel. I think it makes it easier to read. That's absolutely important. I want as many readers as possible to be able to experience what I'm drawing. I want them back for the next issue.

So the challenge becomes to do as much as you can within every panel, to make it more dynamic?

Yes [*Taking a chomp out of a burger*]. And it's a lot of fun. The Hulk has some strange proportions. I mean, he has muscles on top of his muscles. You've got to be careful not to overdo it, because otherwise, the book becomes less credible. So I try to put him in real environments. I try to make the backgrounds as convincing as possible, because if they're convincing, you can have this weird, wild character and people can still believe it. I think of the Walt Disney cartoons as examples. I mean, here you have Pinocchio, a dancing puppet. But because he's put into a believable, beautiful environment, you become lost in the story and everything seems completely credible.

In leaving *Wolverine*, you left one of Marvel's flagship titles. It was a very solid gig. Why leave?

I was on *Wolverine* for almost three years. He's a great character, but when I drew the *Onslaught: Marvel Universe* and *Onslaught: X-Men* one-shots, I got a taste of other Marvel characters I hadn't drawn before. I really liked it. Later, *Hulk* was presented to me, and I took it.



VITAL STATS

OCCUPATIONS: Artist on Marvel's *The Incredible Hulk*, hamburger critic

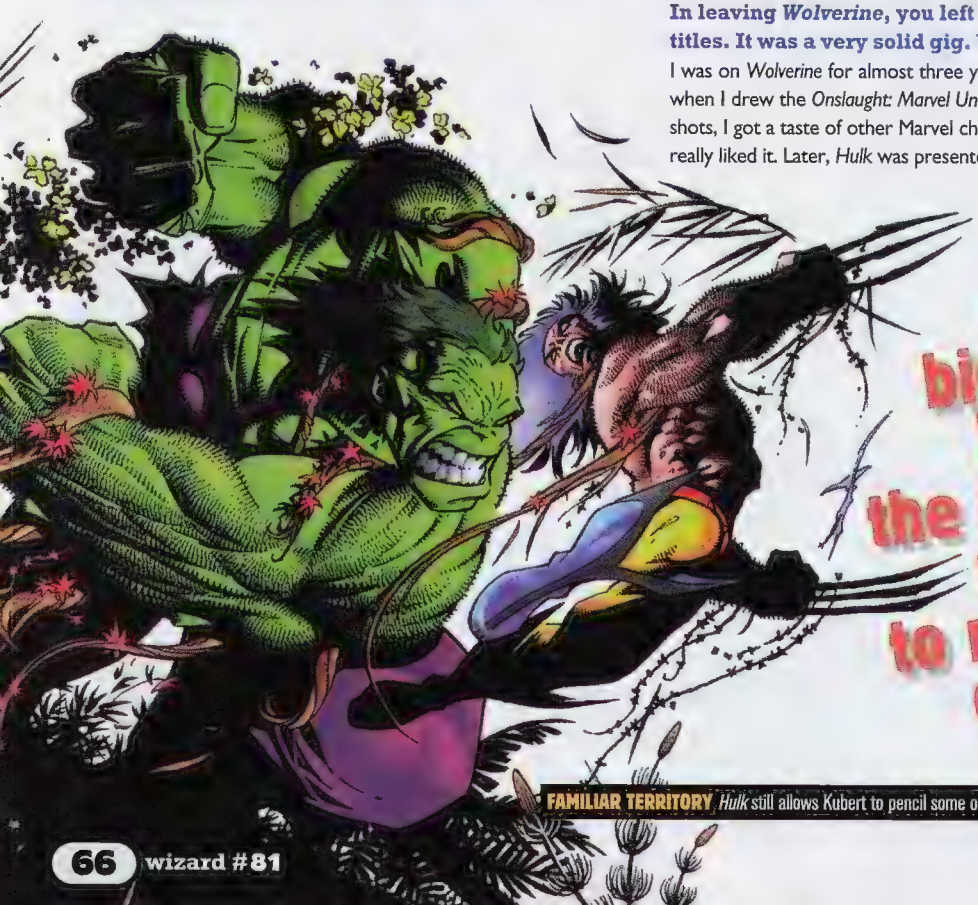
BORN: October 6, 1959 in Boonton, N.J.

BASE OF OPERATIONS: The basement of The Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art in Dover, N.J.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: After lettering everything from *Firestorm* to *Sgt. Rock*, he went on to pencil and ink such books as *Batman vs. Predator*, *X-Men 2099* and *Ghost Rider/Blaze: Spirits of Vengeance*, before hitting it big with a sporadic run of over 25 issues penciling *Wolverine* from 1994 to 1996, which vaulted him to stardom and his current highly acclaimed penciling gig on *Incredible Hulk*.

PROUDEST ARTISTIC MOMENT: "*Wolverine* #90. We did a cataclysmic battle between Wolverine and Sabretooth with six different multi-page gatefold spreads. That was exciting."

CASTLE CONDIMENTS: "I take 'em with ketchup, mustard and the inevitable White Castle onions."



"Fans demand bigger and better all the time, and we've got to meet their demands."

–Adam Kubert

FAMILIAR TERRITORY *Hulk* still allows Kubert to pencil some old friends, such as Wolverine (at right).

MARVEL COMICS
Read Thor #1 from Marvel Comics...
but don't stand under a tree.
the mighty
THOR
This May, Believing Is Seeing
www.marvel.com

SMASH HIT The moment Kubert jumped on *Hulk*, the book transformed into a big seller for Marvel.

*AT this point, some crazy-looking guy who's been milling around outside in the parking lot walks up to a side window and raps on it—*LOUDLY!*—with his umbrella. Activity within the restaurant stops as we all stare at the umbrella guy. He stares back, and having provoked no further reaction, raps on the window again. We all continue to gaze at him. A sudden look of satisfaction crosses his face, and he turns on his heel and leaves.*

"Now that's *what I'm talking about!" Adam exclaims. "You want real-life background characters, you get 'em here! Let's see Burger King do that! I think Umbrella Man's gonna appear in a future issue of* Hulk*!"*

Early in the Castle eat-off, I make a point to get one ahead of Kubert. I'm in the lead, three burgers to two.

On *Incredible Hulk*, you work with Peter David, who's been writing the book for 11 years. What's it like working with him? Do you contribute to the writing as well?

Peter's the one who writes it. I have a lot of suggestions. Sometimes he takes them [*Smiles and pauses*], sometimes he doesn't. I think my contribution to the book is in my art. I'll take his stories and do what I feel is right as far as dramatizing his story. But it's his story, and I have immense respect for his story.

Since you've been on *Hulk*, sales have been on a steady upward climb. It looks like you're the catalyst. Is this true?

Oh, it's all me! [*Laughs*] Ah…I would like to *think* it was me. But you know, Marvel really pushed the book when I got on. Maybe me getting on gave them an opportunity to push it. I think readers were looking for something new on the book. I don't know. I'd like to think it was me, I guess [*Pops a french fry in his mouth and smiles*]. Who wouldn't?

The only knock against you is the fact that you can't do the book on a monthly basis. *Incredible Hulk* has frequent fill-in artists. Why can't you crank out one issue of *Hulk* every month?

Well, coming to White Castle for the day doesn't help my schedule too much! You may have to answer to my editor for this. [*Chuckles*] I think artists who can do 12 consecutive issues are now the exception to the rule. When I do *Hulk*, I put *everything* I've got into each issue. Sometimes that takes longer than four weeks. I don't feel as though it's hurt my career. I don't feel as though it has hurt sales too much.

[*He turns solemn.*] I know people could be disappointed if they pick up an issue and think it is me, but it's not. I would feel ripped off, too. I'm sorry, but I put everything I've got into each issue and sometimes it takes a little longer.

In your father's era, most artists did consistent, monthly work. But today, you say that's the exception to the rule. Why the change?

I think more is expected of artists today. [*Opens burger, removes pickle, takes a bite of burger.*] People love detail in comic art, and the printing process is a lot more advanced today. That means you can put in a lot more detail that you know will show up. When print quality gets better and coloring gets better, that raises the bar for everyone. Fans demand bigger and better all the time, and we've got to deliver better all the time. We've got to meet their demands.

Don't you like the pickles?

Sometimes I eat 'em, sometimes I don't.

You've just signed a new three-year exclusive deal with Marvel. Anything new for you over the course of this contract?

One thing I know of. I'm drawing all the exterior graphics for the Marvel Islands of Adventure, which is a new part of the Universal Studios theme park in Orlando, Fla. I'm drawing exteriors for the rides, the restaurant, the outside of anything you see.

Sounds neat. How'd you get the job?

If I had known about it and heard they offered it to anyone else, I would have tracked them down and forced them to let me do it. But they happened to have called and asked me to do it.

How big are these exteriors?

That's the funny part. Everything I do, I'm doing on a 10-by-15-inch piece of paper. And some of this stuff is going to be enlarged to 60 feet or even 72 feet. So, it's just a really cool job.

AN old lady wearing a handmade crocheted hat, navy blue in color, slowly shuffles by. She's carrying her tray, which has only one burger and a cup of coffee on it.

Wolverine
#125
148 PAGES
CHRIS CLAREMONT
LIENEL FRANCIS YU
LOGAN
VS.
ROGUE
PSYLOCKE
TYGER TIGER
JESSICA DREW
YUKIO
PHOENIX
THE HAND
HYDRA
Guest Starring
KITTY PRYDE &
JUBILEE
X-MEN
UNCANNY
X-MEN #356
THE ORIGINAL
X-MEN ARE REUNITED
CABLE #65
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FAMILY AFFAIR

For Adam Kubert, comics run in the blood. "I guess it was pretty cool as a kid," he says. "My brother Andy and I always had comics. Made for great bathroom reading."

Adam and Andy always wound up on the receiving end of the free comics sent to Joe Kubert, their father and the longtime artist of many DC Comics war titles. As an artist, Joe Kubert is held in high regard. But he seemed just a normal dad to young Adam. "Then he brought me to a comic convention when I was 9 years old and I saw throngs of fans that wanted his autograph and came up to ask him questions. I realized, 'Hey! This guy is important!' Other than that, he just seemed like any other dad on the block."

BRO' ANDY

Adam eventually came to know the same comic fame. Soon after graduating with a degree in medical illustration from the prestigious Rochester Institute of Technology, Adam tired of drawing anatomically correct livers and lungs. He shifted to comic illustration... with a little teaching at the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art and a classmate named Andy Kubert. So what's it like going to school where Dad runs the show? "Dad was tougher on us than the rest of the students," Adam remembers, "because if the Kuberts got away with something, how would that reflect on him or his school?"

Today, Adam is riding high on *Incredible Hulk* while Andy is starting a high-profile assignment on *Captain America*. The brothers have studio space next to each other in the basement of the Kubert School. Any sibling rivalry here? Adam doesn't think so. "I'm usually satisfied with what I'm doing," he says. "So there's no rivalry there. As long as I stay ahead of him on the *Wizard* 'Top 10 Artists' list, I'm a happy man." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

"What's going on here?" she asks, looking at all the lights the photographer has set up. "We're doing an interview," Adam says. "I'm a comic artist. It's for a comic book magazine."

"Can I watch?" the old lady asks.

"Sure," Adam says. The old lady settles onto a stool at the counter near our booth and slowly sips her coffee. For the rest of the interview, she is transfixed, sitting on the edge of her seat and hanging on Adam's every word.

I'm still ahead, seven Castles to six.

I understand you were once on the TV game show "What's My Line." How did you wind up there?

I was the youngest professional comic letterer. I was 11 years old at the time.

What were you lettering?

I was lettering *Sgt. Rock Battle Albums*, stuff my dad edited.

Sounds like a lot of nepotism going on there.

[*Laughs*] Yeah! A *lot* of nepotism! Some kids had paper routes; I lettered comic books. I had the patience for it, I guess. And my hand was steady enough to do it. So I was on the show and [the contestants] had to guess who the letterer was. The prizes I won were the best. I still remember exactly what I won. It was a ton of useless stuff: some Sara Coventry jewelry, a green-and-purple polka-dot dress that my mom never wore—I'll never forgive her for that—and $50 cash. That's it.

The $50 could buy a lot of Castles.

Yeah! [*Raises a burger as if making a toast.*] It *did* buy a lot of Castles!

You also had a brush of fame with boxing legend Mike Tyson?

Almost. Mike Tyson happens to be a huge X-Men fan. When I was on *Wolverine*, I was asked by the president of [the cable network] Showtime to do a drawing of Mike Tyson with the X-Men, which was presented to him before the first Tyson-Holyfield fight, the one before the ear-biting one. They flew me out to Vegas and I went to a Showtime party with all these movie stars and everything. It was really an experience, even though I didn't get a chance to meet Tyson. I really wanted to meet him; that would have been a lot of fun.

Looks like being an 11-year-old comic book letterer finally got you somewhere. So what's the future look like for you? Any creators you haven't worked with yet who you'd like to do a project with?

I would love to draw something written by Frank Miller. [*Actually picks up tape recorder and yells into condenser mike.*] HEAR THAT, FRANK? ARE YOU LISTENING? He's amazing. He can tell a simple, straightforward story and make it dramatic and legible and throw you for a loop all at the same time. He's the man.

How about a dream project? What would be the pinnacle for you?

Someday, I'd like to do the whole package. Write, draw, color and letter the whole thing. I've got experience. The only thing that I haven't done yet is the writing end of it. I would be totally responsible for the project. I think putting out something like that would be really personal, and I'd love to see what kind of feedback it would get. That's something that I look forward to doing someday.

With that, we finish. The blue hat lady gets up and walks over to Adam. She puts her hand on his shoulder and says, in a kind and motherly way, "You're such a nice, well-spoken young man. You give a really good interview. I'm sure you'll go far in your field." Adam puts his hand on hers and says, "Thanks. Hope you enjoyed the show." She smiles and saunters off.

"See?" Adam says. "These kind of real people don't come to McDonald's." Then, looking up at the menu, Adam asks, "Hey, do you sell 'em frozen here?" The man behind the counter indicates that they do. "Great!" Adam says. "Gimme a dozen. My dad wants me to bring some home." (W)

THE GREAT CASTLE-OFF

As we began, two challengers climbed into the burger rumble: Adam's brother Andy (penciler on *Ka-Zar*) **and inker-extraordinaire Jimmy "The Gut" Palmiotti. The feast was furious and ace photog Paul Schiraldi had to clean beef from his camera lens many times. When the dust and wrappers settled, the results were...**

Jim McLauchlin: Nine Castles
Adam Kubert: Eight Castles
Jimmy Palmiotti: Seven Castles
Andy Kubert: Five Castles

WHAT WE CRAVE...
Mmm, steamed goodness.

Staff writer Jim McLauchlin would like to thank the whole gang at the White Castle at 43rd Avenue and Queens Boulevard in Queens, N.Y., for their assistance. For more information on White Castle's fine food products or to locate a Castle near you, call 1-800-THE-CRAVE. Tell 'em *Wizard* sent you.

PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN #92
DUSK DUSTS THE TRAPSTER
SPIDER-MAN "IDENTITY CRISIS"
THE CONCLUSION !
SPIDER-MAN
SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #28
THE HORNET VS. THE VULTURE
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #258
PRODIGY FACES THE CONUNDRUM
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #435
RICOCHET STRIKES BACK
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CASTING call

WIZARD casts the MAJOR BUMMER MOVIE!

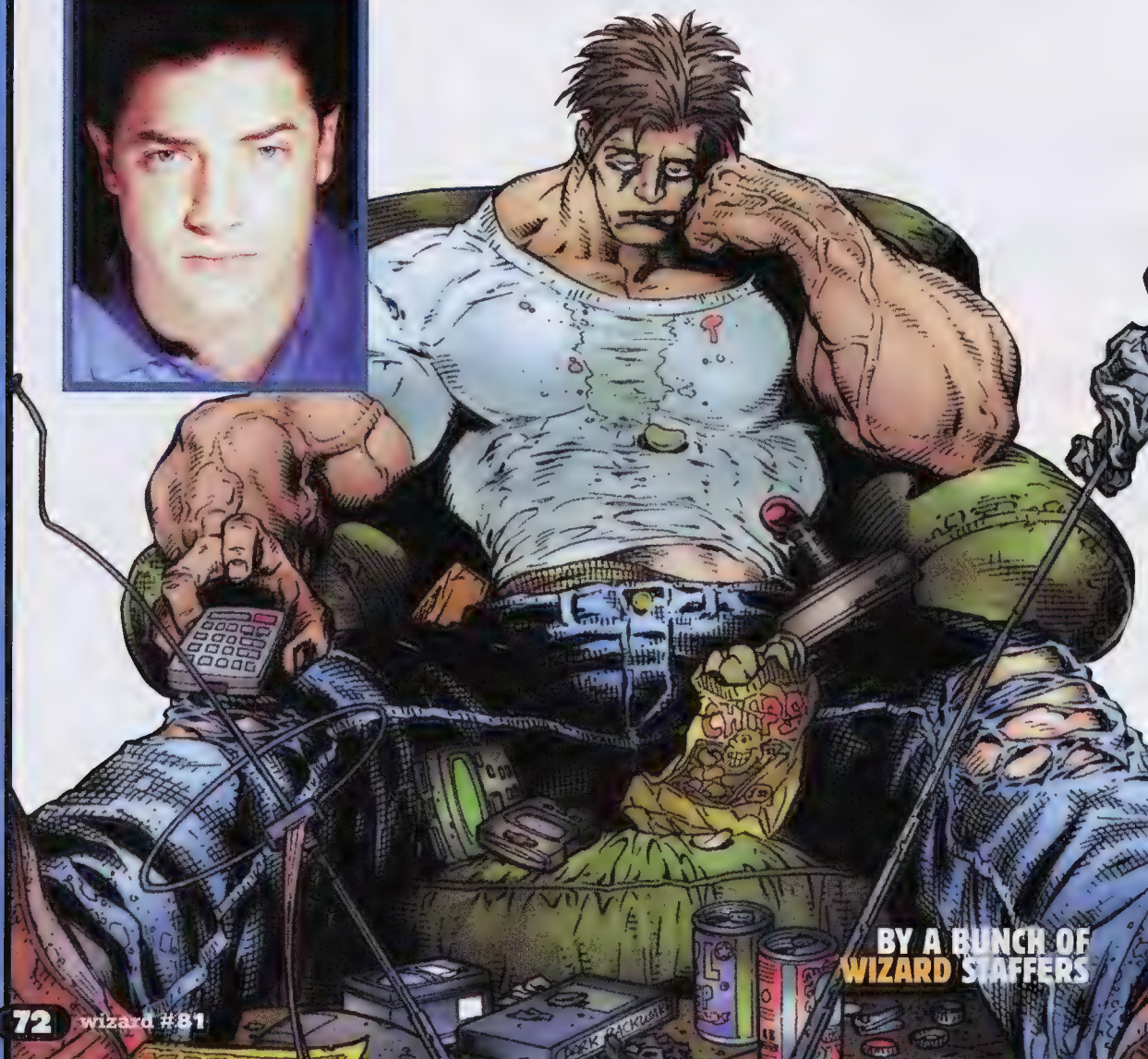
Talk about yer *major* box-office bonanza! "Major Bummer: The Movie" would beautifully elevate the time-honored tradition of slacking to a fine art. It's the kind of film we'd rush right out to see—if only we weren't so damn lazy.

What's it about? Glad you asked. Lou Martin's a superpowered 20-something-year-old bum, an ordinary schlub given superhuman powers by an alien device. Where Martin was once a lazy nobody, now he's a super-strong and super-intelligent lazy nobody. The punchline? The device that gave Martin his powers was meant for someone else—a responsible someone.

The endless drone of laughter from a "Major Bummer" film would surely disrupt commerce in the continental 48 states—and maybe even Guam. Unfortunately, there's no such film in the works. But hey, if any of you Hollywood hotshots out there are listenin'...what the heck are you waiting for?!? Anyway, here's who made the cut in our majorly hysterical movie.

BRENDAN FRASER as LOUIS MARTIN

Ah, those vacant eyes, that blank stare—Brendan Fraser ("George of the Jungle") has built his acting career playing bleary-eyed dopes like Lou Martin.



BY A BUNCH OF WIZARD STAFFERS

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE...

Marvel Universe #1

FEATURING:

THE INVADERS

WRITTEN & DRAWN BY:

- ROGER STERN
- STEVE EPTING
- AL WILLIAMSON
- CARLOS PACHECO

MARVEL HEROES

AVENGERS #5
WITH THE SQUADRON SUPREME

FANTASTIC FOUR #6
CHRIS CLAREMONT'S FIRST FULL ISSUE

IRON MAN #5
ENGULFED BY FIREBRAND

CAPTAIN AMERICA #6
ATTACK OF THE SKRULLS

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CLINT HOWARD as GECKO

Offbeat wackiness is Clint Howard's ("Backdraft") middle name. Really! Sounds like a perfect match for the goofy wall-crawling hero Gecko.

TYRA BANKS as VAL

We'd let gorgeous supermodel Tyra Banks play Cartman in a "South Park" flick if she wanted to. Luckily, she won't need to put on any extra pounds to play the good-hearted but ditzy fly-girl Val.

DORIS ROBERTS as LAUREN ISLEY

We predict portly precognizant pest Lauren Isley foretells of...Doris Roberts from "Everybody Loves Raymond" portraying her in this film.

IGGY POP as FRANCIS DUTTON

Being deafened by long-haired superego Francis Dutton's sonic scream is a pleasant alternative to communicating with this pompous, overbearing jerk. Grizzled long-haired rock icon Iggy Pop ("The Crow II: City of Angels") packs the look, attitude and voice to make Dutton sing.

MARVEL ANNUAL '98 STARRING:
MACHINE MAN AND BASTION
(2 Issues – 48 Pages)
UNTHINKING HUMAN BIGOTRY
VS.
THE THINKING COMPUTER !
ENGINES OF DESTRUCTION
CABLE • MACHINE MAN • BASTION
SEEKER 3000
SEEKER 3000
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THEIR VOYAGE BEGAN
THE DAY THE SUN DIED !
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JAMIE FOXX as **MARTIN LEWIS**

Square-jawed do-gooder Martin Lewis makes Cindy Brady look like a Hell's Angel. For goodness' sake, he should be played by his Xerox copy, Jamie Foxx, star of "The Jamie Foxx Show."

ANDREW "DICE" CLAY as **NUNZIO**

Hickory, dickory dock...failed comic and failing actor Andrew "Dice" Clay ("Brain Smasher...A Love Story") could go off unemployment if he agreed to lend his voice to the muscled bad-ass Nunzio (whose body is a special effect waiting to happen).

JEFFREY JONES as **ZINNAC**

Frog-throated Jeffrey Jones ("Ferris Bueller's Day Off") is set for a Close Encounter, as the voice of alien Zinnac. The blubbery green-skinned character would be cheesily rendered with a cheap, ill-fitting latex suit.

WAYNE KNIGHT as **YOOF**

Whiny, brain-dead alien Yoof's Earthbound counterpart is Wayne Knight ("Seinfeld"). Knight's voice and about six bucks' worth of rubber alien suit are all we'd need to create Zinnac's dopey brother.

KATHY KINNEY as **BRIDGET**

High-voltage badness is the electricity-spewing Bridget's stock-in-trade. She's bad, all right, but no moreso than her thespian pal (and doppelgänger) Kathy Kinney ("The Drew Carey Show").

JOHN HILLERMAN as **REGGIE**

Verily, acrocephalic blackguard Reggie's obtuse allocution obfuscates indelibly. Huh? Anyway, Jonathan Hillerman ("Magnum, P.I.") would have his hands (and mouth) full playing this unintelligible cur.

MARILYN MANSON as **CARLOS**

Need creepitude in mass quantity? Satan's rock-star pal Marilyn Manson buys his creepiness in bulk; stick him to a wall and you've got the criminal Carlos.

ANGELINA JOLIE as **NANCY**

With an angelic smile that can turn down-right nasty in a nanosecond, and enough poise to make acting in lingerie look easy, Angelina Jolie ("Gia," "Hackers") was born to take on the role of bad seed Nancy.

QUIET ON THE SET!

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED: FRASER: ALBERT SANCHEZ/OUTLINE; FOXX: NEAL PRESTON/OUTLINE; BANKS: GREY ZISSER/OUTLINE; POP: CHRIS CUFARO/OUTLINE; JONES: JEFF SLOCOMB/OUTLINE; MANSON: STEVE SANOS/OUTLINE; KNIGHT: THOMAS LAU/OUTLINE; KINNEY: ALBERTO TOLOT/OUTLINE; JOLIE: STEVE SMITH/OUTLINE; HOWARD COURTESY OF FOTO FANTASIES

HBO'S 'SPAWN' CREATES A STIR

Big ratings, racy material has viewers on edge for second animated season

The groundbreaking **"Spawn"** animated series was a monster hit for HBO, and with everybody but the critics. While "Spawn," which was based on **Todd McFarlane**'s Image comic drew boffo ratings, and a collection of the six animated episodes sold more than 600,000 copies on home video, many mainstream reviewers railed against the series' R-rated violence, language and nudity.

"With the critics, you would think it was some sort of pornographic material we were doing," supervising director Eric Radomski said. "And yet people were watching in droves. To be honest, the only negative letters we got were people who were pissed that we didn't have more shows. It was like, 'We don't want to wait a year. We want more episodes.'"

The wait is nearly over. The second season of six episodes of "Spawn" will begin on May 16, continuing the no-holds-barred tone of the first. There will be improvements in the form of a new, Japanese animation house, more detailed backgrounds, even more shadows and stand-alone stories.

In many ways, Radomski said, the second season is more about Terry Fitzgerald than Spawn.

"Terry Fitzgerald stumbles upon more information that leads him to Jason Wynn, who he finds is somehow tied to the alleys and the guns and the intrigue that is going on," Radomski said. "When he trips onto the secret code in the computer, Jason is on to him and Terry's got to run for his life until he can come up with something strong enough to indict Mr. Wynn and save his ass."

Spawn will be torn between helping Terry and having the access to the life he once had with Wanda.

"He's trying to come to grips with if he has any stake in

CLOSE UP ERIC STOLTZ

FACTS & FACES

ERIC STOLTZ, 36, has shown tremendous range in his film career, earning critical acclaim for the lead role in "Mask," playing a strung-out drug dealer in "Pulp Fiction" and chasing a killer snake in "Anaconda." Stoltz is one of many high-profile stars–including Dermot Mulroney and Nicholas Turturro–who will guest-voice on the second season of HBO's "Spawn" animated series.

DARK KNIGHT What hath the animated "Spawn" spawned? Try a second season and some big-name guest voices.

SPAWN PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY HBO ANIMATION. ERIC STOLTZ/JOSEPH LEDERER © 1994 COLUMBIA PICTURES, COURTESY OF FOTO FANTASIES

saving Terry or helping Wanda—how does he fit into the intrigue of what's going on?" Radomski said. "Then he realizes that Terry's trying to get the goods on Wynn, and Spawn has a final confrontation with Wynn in the sixth episode of the second season."

Also involved are a season-opening showdown with Chapel, a serial killer taxi driver, a gang trying to take over Spawn's alley and Spawn making himself known to Wanda.

Twelve more scripts of "Spawn" have been ordered, and six of those have been green-lit for third-season production, with John Leekley on board as an in-house writer.

What's in store for the third season? Radomski said those shows will be a big diversion from previous ones, looking more at the mythology of Spawn. He hinted about a character named Lisa Wu, a mysterious reporter, and an angelic character called Jade who will eventually battle Spawn.

"It gets more into the supernatural elements of the character, and [McFarlane] has agreed to go in that direction," Radomski said. "It certainly pulls in more of the qualities of the comic book."

Guest voices for the series include **Eric Stoltz**, Dermot Mulroney, Nick Turturro, Debbi Morgan and Robert Forster. ■ **ROB ALLSTETTER**

COSTUME PARTY

Batmobile and Wonder Woman find their way into prime time

NOT QUITE NAKED "Truth" star Téa Leoni as the Amazon Princess.

TEA LEONI/EVERETT COLLECTION. SILVER SURFER © 1997 SABAN ENTERTAINMENT, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. SPIDER-MAN © FOX.

Superhero mania has been running wild on prime-time network sitcoms. **Téa Leoni** recently took a turn, dressing as Wonder Woman for an episode of "The Naked Truth" on NBC and a recent episode of **"The Drew Carey Show"** on ABC focused entirely on the Batmobile. In the episode, Carey won a fast-food restaurant contest in which he got to choose between $200,000 or the Batmobile. Carey chose the Batmobile, but later had to return it because he violated the "morals clause" of the contest after defiling the vehicle by having sex in it. ■ **JOHN B. LACEY**

SURFING THE LONELY SKIES

'Silver Surfer' voice finds it best to work alone

The **Silver Surfer** is truly a loner. Just ask Paul Essiembre, the Canadian actor who does the Surfer's voice for the "Silver Surfer" animated series on Fox.

Unlike a lot of voice recording sessions for other animated series, Essiembre more often than not finds himself alone in the Toronto studio when he performs the Surfer's voice—which he says isn't a bad thing.

SPACE CADET Outer space can be lonely for a single guy.

"He's such a solitary, lost, alone person," Essiembre said. "So to be in the studio, it's good to be alone as the Surfer. It can actually be kind of neat. Depending on the day, depending on the mood, we can really get artsy-fartsy. We sort of dim the lights, get the atmosphere right and start to fantasize: 'OK, this is space. We're floating in space.'"

Essiembre helped dub cartoons from Japan and Czechoslovakia during his early professional years in Montreal, but "Silver Surfer" is his first original animation work.

Essiembre, who has an extensive theater background and has appeared in such films as **"Good Will Hunting"** and "The Long Kiss Goodnight," finished recording the first season of "Silver Surfer" last August. He said he expects to begin working on the second season by March.

The Surfer opened in February to strong ratings. Upcoming episodes will include "Inner Visions," which guest stars Beta Ray Bill and has Thanos attacking a planet of Dreamers, where inhabitants are hooked up to a dream machine; and "Anti-Body," based on a story by Harlan Ellison and introducing the Frankie Raye version of Nova. ■ **RA**

WINNERS&LOSERS

WHO SCORED...WHO BORED

WINNER OF THE MONTH: The "Silver Surfer" animated cartoon on Fox. The show scored big in the ratings in its debut and, based on the quality of the animation, looks like it will be the next big Marvel-based cartoon, following on the heels of previous successes "X-Men," "Spider-Man" and "Incredible Hulk."

LOSER OF THE MONTH: Spider-Man's final cartoon episode on Fox. While the appearance of Peter Parker's deceased Uncle Ben was emotional, the show strayed from its successful action-oriented format. The ode to Spider-Man creator Stan Lee was nice for hard-core comic fans, but only confused mainstream fans of the cartoon.

F.A.K.K.2 FACT FILE

'Ninja Turtle' creator Eastman teams with Bisley on animated project

JOINING FORCES Eastman (left) and Bisley

Get ready for some new **Heavy Metal** noise. Columbia TriStar will be releasing "Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.2," a $15-million animated sci-fi/adventure movie, to theaters in the spring of 1999.

The movie is based on the concepts of **Kevin Eastman**, co-creator of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. It's a blend of *Melting Pot*, a 1994 graphic novel Eastman produced with artist **Simon Bisley**, and F.A.K.K.2, a fantasy superheroine.

Eastman wrote a treatment and the initial pass at a screenplay, which was then adapted by director George Unger, who also worked on the original "Heavy Metal" movie. Traditional animation and most of the design and storyboards are being done in Montreal by Cinegroupe, with computer-generated images by Germany-based Helkon.

F.A.K.K. stands for Federation Assigned Ketogenic Killzone. F.A.K.K.2 is a planet containing secrets so great that only the terrifying classification could keep the spoilers away.

F.A.K.K.2 is also a woman who has assumed the name of the world she cherished. She is a warrior on a single-purpose mission to hunt down the pirate who abducted her sister from their planet and has stolen its most precious secrets.

"We know we've got to come up with a film for $15 million that's going to compete with $80-$100 million studio productions," Eastman said. "There are scenes in this movie where you get this sweeping shot through this epic battle scene where there's over a million warriors fighting. We know we need to accomplish something that you only can try in animation and make it work."

Eastman said, after some urging from Columbia, the movie will be rated PG-13, with a possible R-rated version for home video in the fall of 1999.

Eastman's wife, B-movie queen Julie Strain, will be voicing the title role. Voice recording should begin within the first half of 1998. ■ **RA**

FAST FORWARD

KEEPING UP WITH ONGOING PROJECTS

PROJECT	RELEASE DATE	KEY PLAYERS	THE SCOOP
HULK	Summer 1999	Writer/director Jonathan Hensleigh; producer Gale Anne Hurd; actors Gregory Sporleder and Lynn Red Williams	*Hensleigh continues to fix the script for Universal Pictures. Despite reports to the contrary, sources said the film–complete with a computer-generated Hulk–continues on a trek to begin production early this summer in Arizona.*
X-MEN	Christmas 1999	Director Bryan Singer; writer Ed Solomon; producer Lauren Shuler-Donner	*Singer and Solomon continue to hammer out the script, with hopes of a September production. Angela Bassett is definitely interested in playing Storm, but there was no casting at press time.*
SPIDER-MAN	None	Possibly writer/director/producer James Cameron; the courts	*This would be a perfect "Titanic" follow-up for Cameron, but the film rights to Spidey remain in litigation hell. "Spider-Man" remains a pet project for Cameron.*
BLADE	Aug. 7, 1998	Director Stephen Norrington; writer David Goyer; actors Wesley Snipes, Stephen Dorff, Kris Kristofferson	*Currently in post-production with some 450 special effects. "The rough cut was spectacular and I'm extremely happy with it," Goyer said.*
FANTASTIC FOUR	None	Executive producer Berhard Eichinger; producer Chris Columbus; director Peter Segal	*Segal was off the project for a while, but has returned. Previous versions of the script had Doctor Doom as the villain and incorporated the FF's origin.*
DAREDEVIL	None	Producer Chris Columbus; director Carlo Carlei; writer J.M. DeMatteis	*On hold. Just as DeMatteis was about to begin writing the screenplay, the movie was put into turnaround and the rights have reverted back to Marvel. The movie would have featured the origin of DD and would have included Elektra, Bullseye and Kingpin.*
SILVER SURFER	2000	Screenwriters John Rice, Rudy Gaines	*Remains in active development. Earlier versions of the script included Galactus–but not the Fantastic Four.*
VENOM	None	Screenwriter David Goyer	*"The project is stalled at the moment," Goyer said. "New Line Cinema doesn't want to move forward until it gets an A-list director."*
DOCTOR STRANGE	None	To be announced	*On hold. Early versions of the script included Mordo and Dormammu.*
IRON MAN	None	Screenwriter Jeff Vintar	*On hold. At one time, Nicolas Cage was linked to the role of Tony Stark.*
CAPTAIN AMERICA	None	Marvel Studios	*On hold. This might be Marvel Studios' first production.*
LUKE CAGE	None	Pressman Films; screenwriter J.D. Zeik	*On hold. At one time, John Singleton was linked as director.*

SNIPES as Blade

WESLEY SNIPES © STEVE SANDS/OUTLINE. MIKE MIGNOLA/J. SCHUYLER, BISLEY/AL ORTEGA

TRAILERS

AVENGERS ASSEMBLING? Bob Skir and Marty Isenberg, occasional writers for "X-Men" and "Spider-Man," have written a story bible and a pilot for "The Avengers," an animated series which might follow "Captain America" for Saban Entertainment and Fox. Skir wouldn't reveal his Avengers lineup, but said, "It's a wonderful opportunity to explore characters who haven't been explored on television before."

Meanwhile, Skir and Isenberg will be story editors for Fox's new fall "Godzilla" series, which will be based on this summer's movie.

SUPERMANIMATION: The second season of "Superman" will end in May with a two-parter guest-starring Supergirl. Producer Bruce Timm said the third season will have 13 episodes, and highlights include a season-opener in September featuring Darkseid and an episode with three members of the Legion of Super-Heroes.

Tim Daly, who does the voice of Clark Kent/Superman, will be starring in "Stephen King's Storm of the Century," a six-hour mini-series for ABC next season.

MIGNOLA ON THE MOVE: Mike Mignola is helping on the development of the new Kids' WB! animated series, "Batman Tomorrow." "We love Mike's stuff and want to use as much as possible," said producer Bruce Timm. Mignola's Hellboy continues to be in development as a movie.

MIGNOLA helps out

MORE NIGHTMAN: The surprise hit "NightMan" syndicated television series has been renewed for a second season by Tribune Entertainment. NightMan creator Steve Englehart, who wrote a first-season episode, said he will be contributing to "multiple episodes" of the second season. "I was quite pleased at how close to the comics the show is," Englehart said.

HELLINA TO VIDEO: Lightning Entertainment has formed Z-Bros Animation, and its first project will be the "Hellina Animated Premiere Video," a straight-to-video production shipping in September. The tape will contain four minutes of animation and a 15-minute live-action sequence with behind-the-scenes footage. Steve Stanchfield, whose credits include "Space Jam" and "Cool World," is heading the animation work.

RUMOR MILL: Production on the third Crow film could begin as early as May. Two different scripts were being worked on....Acclaim's live-action projects could include a Shadowman feature film....David Mack's "Kabuki" remains a possible animated series for HBO.

SHORT TAKES: The "Gen13" animated movie still doesn't have a release date....Production has begun on "Black Scorpion," a Showtime television series based on the two Roger Corman telefilms featuring a masked, female crimefighter. Julie Strain takes over the lead role from Joan Severance....Brian Michael Bendis is working on the second draft of his "A.K.A. Goldfish" script for Miramax....Espers creator James Hudnall said plans for a television series based on his Image Comics series are on hold....Tommy Lee Jones ("Men in Black") will be doing the voice of Chip Hazard in this summer's "Small Soldiers" film....Ben Edlund, creator of The Tick, is writing a remake to the 1964 film "Santa Claus Conquers the Martians."...Pressman Film has acquired the movie/television rights to Mickey Spillane's Mike Danger from BIG Entertainment, which published Danger's futuristic comic book adventures. ■RA

YOU TELL US WHERE TO STICK IT

THE OFFICIAL WIZARD survey OF doom!

YOU'VE CHANGED WIZARD.

Since its inception nearly seven years ago, *Wizard: The Comics Magazine* has been designed by the comic book fans. Be it through letters, e-mail, face-to-face conversations at conventions or surveys like this, your input has made this magazine what it is today.

Dramatic pause.

The issue you're holding in your hands—*Wizard* #81—is the newly redesigned issue. New columns. New departments. Whole new look. And we wanna know what you think. Just take a few minutes of your time, fill out the form below and YOU will shape the future of this magazine. Pretty stressful, huh?

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS: With Crayola in hand, mark one box per line, fill in your name, address and stuff, and then lick a stamp. It's that simple.

AWESOME! NOW *THIS* IS WHY I BUY *WIZARD*!
COOL! IT NEEDS WORK, BUT IT'S PRETTY GOOD.
BLAH! THIS STUFF WAS JUST KINDA...THERE.
CRAPOLA! BLANK PAGES WOULDA BEEN BETTER.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

	AWESOME!	COOL!	BLAH!	CRAPOLA!
"The Killing Game" (Hitman)	☐	☐	☐	☐
"Cutting the Cord" (Cable)	☐	☐	☐	☐
"On the Brink" (Alan Davis)	☐	☐	☐	☐
"'Storm Watch" (WildStorm tour)	☐	☐	☐	☐
"The Avengers Files"	☐	☐	☐	☐
Adam Kubert Q&A	☐	☐	☐	☐

THIS MONTH'S PROMOTIONS

Superman contest	☐	☐	☐	☐
Battle Chasers contest	☐	☐	☐	☐
Scud contest	☐	☐	☐	☐
Generation X #1/2 offer	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coven poster	☐	☐	☐	☐

THIS MONTH'S PRICE GUIDE STUFF

Comic book price guide	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good Readin'	☐	☐	☐	☐
Famous Firsts	☐	☐	☐	☐
We Read it For You	☐	☐	☐	☐

C'MON, YA BABY, CUT 'EM OUT.
And remember, neatness counts...

KEEPING AMERICA SAFE FOR SMALL ANIMALS AND THE ELDERLY

COLUMNS & DEPTS.

	AWESOME!	COOL!	BLAH!	CRAPOLA!
From the Top	☐	☐	☐	☐
Magic Words	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wizard News & Notes	☐	☐	☐	☐
Last Man Standing	☐	☐	☐	☐
Casting Call	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coming Attractions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Basic Training	☐	☐	☐	☐
Drawing Board	☐	☐	☐	☐
Toy Chest	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stuff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Video Stuff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Homemade Heroes	☐	☐	☐	☐
Character Profile	☐	☐	☐	☐
Top 10 Heroes & Villains	☐	☐	☐	☐
Picks	☐	☐	☐	☐
Report Card	☐	☐	☐	☐
Manga Scene	☐	☐	☐	☐
Market Watch	☐	☐	☐	☐
Top 10 Comics	☐	☐	☐	☐
Top 100	☐	☐	☐	☐
Creator Spotlight	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shows & Cons	☐	☐	☐	☐
CBIQ	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bullpen	☐	☐	☐	☐
Time Travel	☐	☐	☐	☐

STILL GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? Jot it down and attach it to your survey!

FREE KITTENS!

Awww, who could resist free little boo-boo kitties? Anyway, *Wizard* will take 100 surveys that went beyond the call of duty (you know, like filling out the survey AND attaching a letter that goes into more detail about *Wizard* and what you like/don't like/hate with the burning fire of a thousand suns) and make those folks the *Wizard* Focus Group.

"What the hell's a 'focus group'?" Good question. It's where some shady company (us) puts together a bunch of good-hearted consumers (you) who purchase its product (*Wizard*) and gets them to work for free. Translation: For the next year, 100 "lucky" fans will correspond with *Wizard* editors on a regular basis, your opinions helping to shape the future of the magazine. In return, you get a better magazine and all sorts of free goodies we have laying around the office that have a high perceived value in the collector community. Limited-edition comics, toys, articles of Jim Lee's clothing, that sort of thing.

But sorry, no free kittens.

ALL ABOUT YOU...

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-Mail Address _____

How long have you been reading *Wizard*? _____

Fill out BOTH PAGES, put them in an envelope and send it all to:

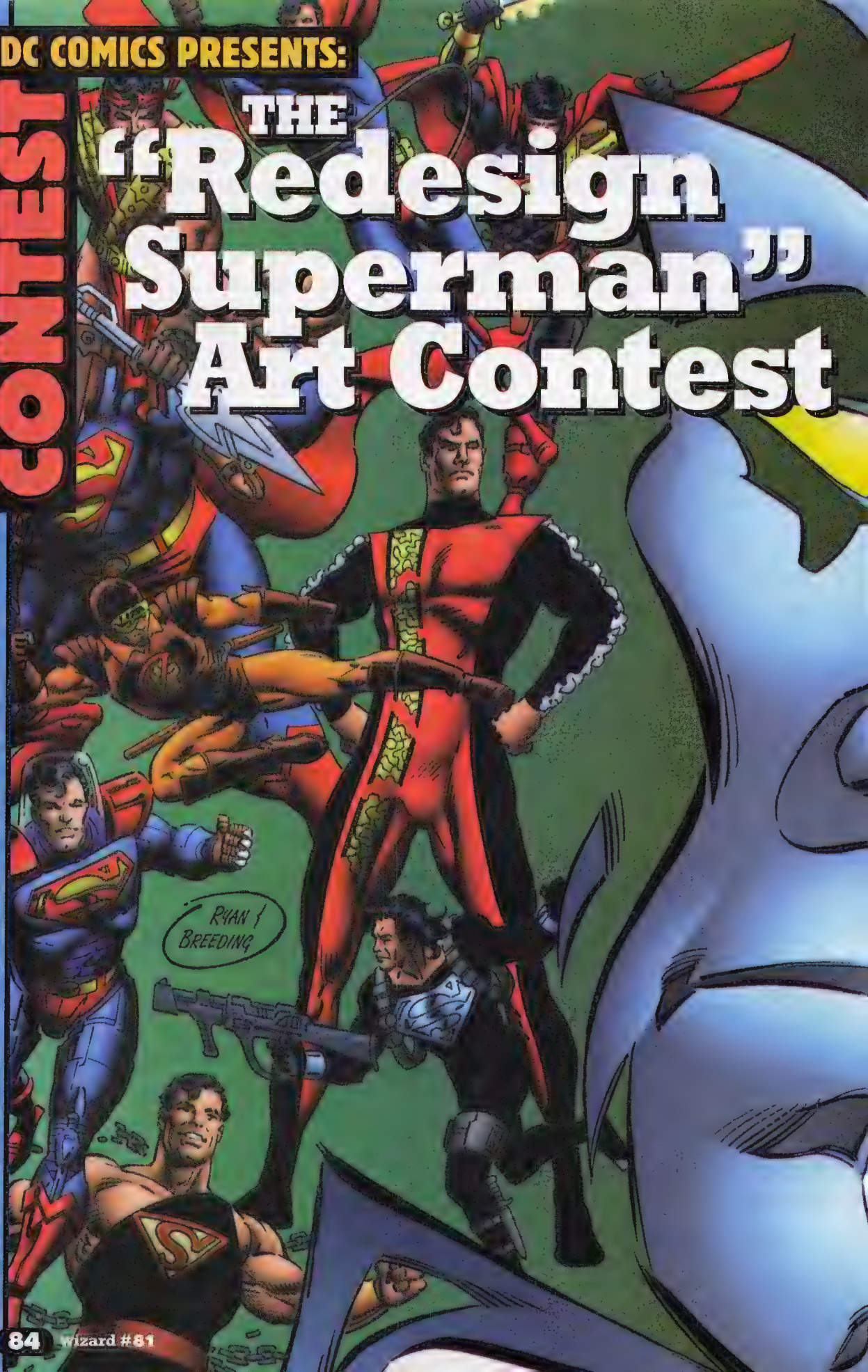
SURVEY OF DOOM #1
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 381
Congers, NY 10920-0381

HEY! THANKS A LOT!

DC COMICS PRESENTS:

CONTEST

THE "Redesign Superman" Art Contest



HOW TO WIN: Well, how to enter, really. Here's how it works: redesign Superman's costume. No, we're not kidding. Just take Supes as your model and play fashion designer. Give him a mask, armor, gloves, bikini briefs, whatever. The coolest-looking and most original entries—aside from winning cool stuff—will also see print in an upcoming issue of *Wizard*! (And hey...humorous entries can win too!)

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): The super, super, super-winner flies off with an original piece of Tom Grummett Superman art depicting the MAN OF STEEL in a costume of the winner's design, a senses-shattering Superman '98 Luminescent Watch and a mini-library of Superman trade paperbacks: *Superman: The Man of Steel, The Death of Superman, World Without a Superman* and *The Return of Superman*!

FIRST PRIZE (5): Five runners-up will receive a whip-ass Superman watch and the collection of four Superman trade paperbacks listed above.

SECOND PRIZE (10): Ten readers walk away with the collection of four Superman trade paperbacks listed above. Actually, they're listed above above, but that's just nit-picking.

Things to keep in mind: Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard and can be in any medium (Oils, crayon, bodily fluids, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" X 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork. Mail flat. Attach name, address and phone number to the back of each piece of artwork submitted.

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY THE FINE FOLKS AT DC COMICS, HOME OF BEPPO THE SUPER-MONKEY.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and put it in an envelope. Send to:
The "Redesign Superman" Art Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

THIS LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR... THE LAWYERS!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, DC Comics, their immediate families and Jerry Seinfeld. He doesn't need to win this contest, he gets to hang out with Superman. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: The "Redesign Superman" Art Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by May 29, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. How cool would it be to have X-ray vision? Well...as long as you could control it. We don't mind seein' hot naked people, but porksters? Eeek! Winners will be notified no later than July 3, 1998. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about June 12, 1998.

For a list of winners, available after June 12, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: The "Redesign Superman" Art Contest Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

"Redesign Superman" Art Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE May 29, 1998!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-Mail _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY?

BASIC TRAINING

GARY FRANK SHOWS YOU

HOW TO DRAW HANDS

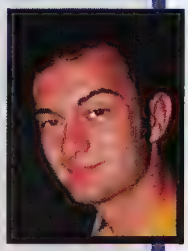


PHOTO: PAUL SCHRADI

Hello, readers. First the bad news. I won't be offering you a magic formula for drawing hands. Hands are capable of assuming as great a complexity and variety of shapes as all the other parts of the body combined, so the idea that you can learn to draw them from a few scant pages is a little optimistic, to say the least.

As for the good news, I'll be giving you some "basic" pointers for drawing those fascinating things at the ends of your arms. The best way to really learn to draw hands is (as with most things) to practice with references. And loads of references are available...just look around you. Check out hands on TV. In movies. In magazines. Why, you can even use yourself as a model. After all, most people contemplating a career in drawing have access to at least one hand...

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

Building Blocks

When you begin, there are certain fundamentals which should be kept in mind. All hands have an underlying foundation. Figure 1 shows an extremely simplistic hand shape in which you can see its basic structure—the "hard points," if you like. These are the primary building blocks of the hand—they are always present no matter what position the hand adopts. The four fingers all move in a fairly restricted plane, but the seam which separates the thumb gives it opposable movement.

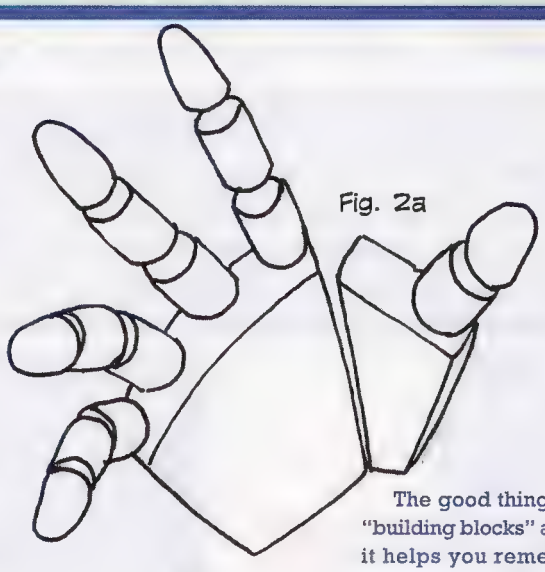


Fig. 2a

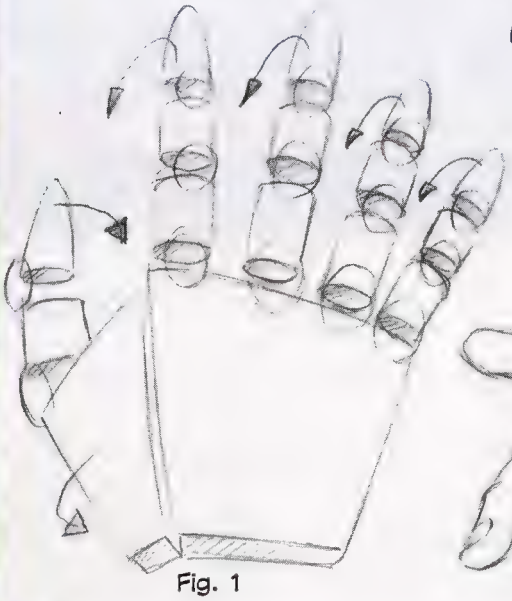


Fig. 1

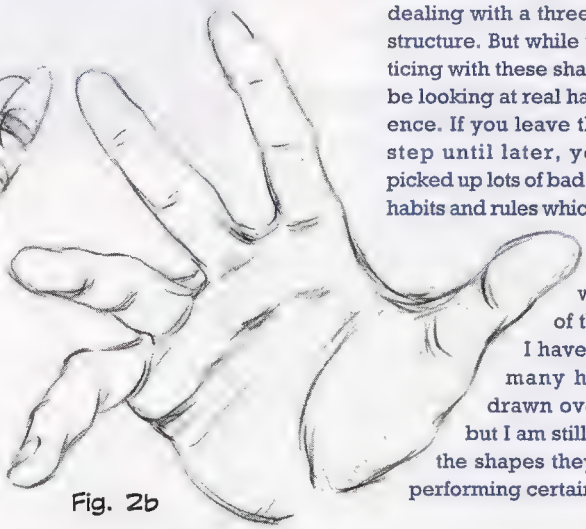
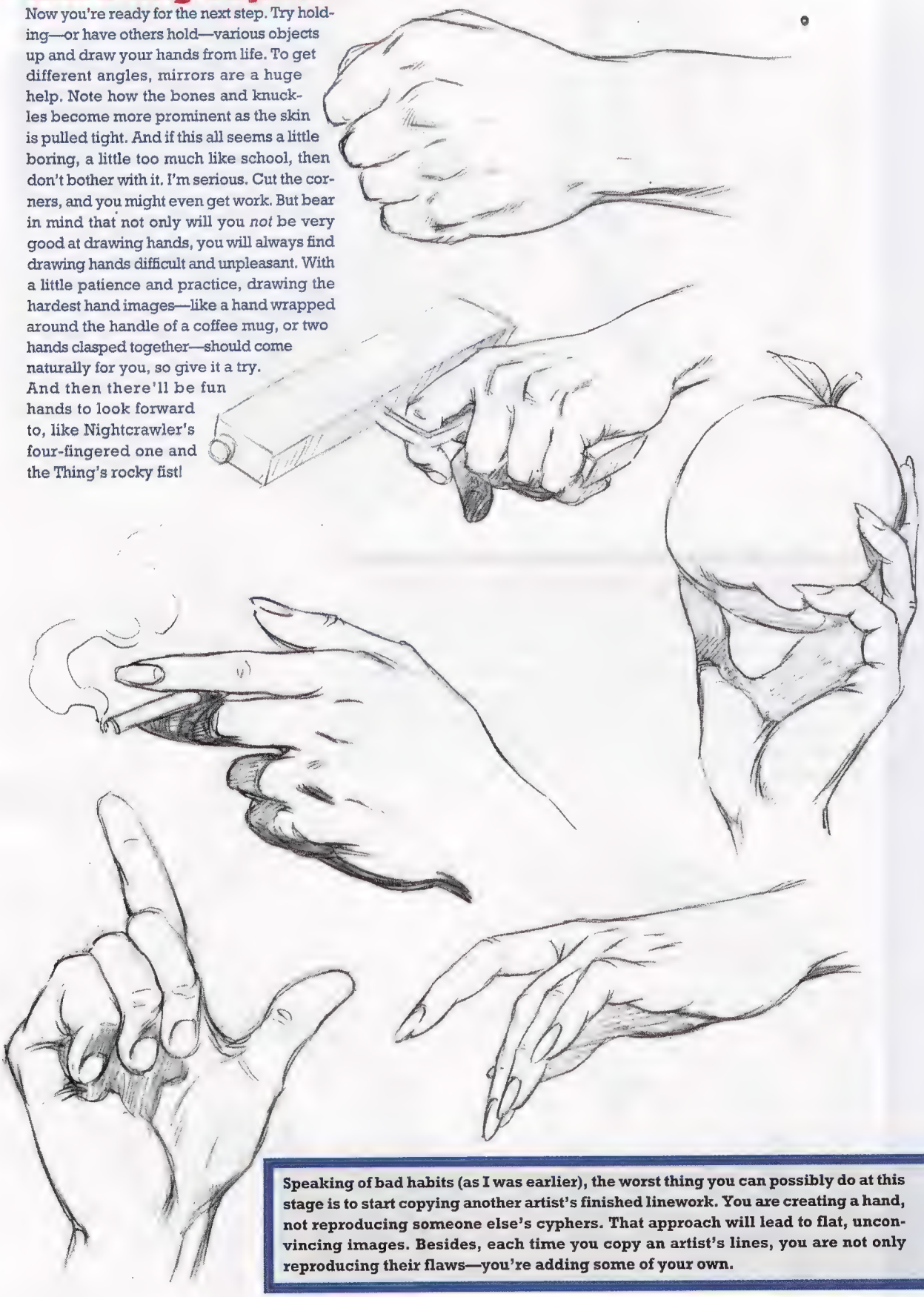


Fig. 2b

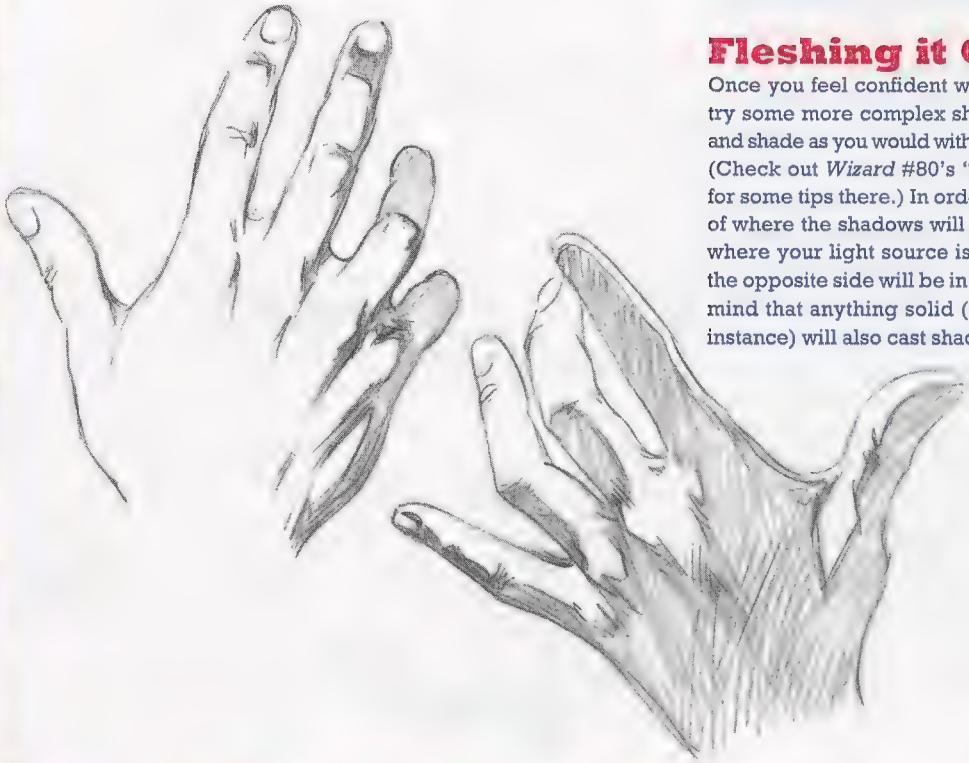
The good thing about using a "building blocks" approach is that it helps you remember you are dealing with a three-dimensional structure. But while you are practicing with these shapes, you *must* be looking at real hands for reference. If you leave this important step until later, you will have picked up lots of bad "mechanical" habits and rules which you will find difficult to reconcile with the image of the real thing. I have no idea how many hands I have drawn over the years, but I am still surprised by the shapes they make when performing certain tasks.

Hand-ling Objects

Now you're ready for the next step. Try holding—or have others hold—various objects up and draw your hands from life. To get different angles, mirrors are a huge help. Note how the bones and knuckles become more prominent as the skin is pulled tight. And if this all seems a little boring, a little too much like school, then don't bother with it. I'm serious. Cut the corners, and you might even get work. But bear in mind that not only will you *not* be very good at drawing hands, you will always find drawing hands difficult and unpleasant. With a little patience and practice, drawing the hardest hand images—like a hand wrapped around the handle of a coffee mug, or two hands clasped together—should come naturally for you, so give it a try. And then there'll be fun hands to look forward to, like Nightcrawler's four-fingered one and the Thing's rocky fist!



Speaking of bad habits (as I was earlier), the worst thing you can possibly do at this stage is to start copying another artist's finished linework. You are creating a hand, not reproducing someone else's cyphers. That approach will lead to flat, unconvincing images. Besides, each time you copy an artist's lines, you are not only reproducing their flaws—you're adding some of your own.



Fleshing it Out

Once you feel confident with basic hands, try some more complex shapes. Add light and shade as you would with simpler objects. (Check out *Wizard* #80's "Basic Training" for some tips there.) In order to get an idea of where the shadows will fall, first decide where your light source is. Everything on the opposite side will be in shadow. Bear in mind that anything solid (like fingers, for instance) will also cast shadows.

My, What Big Hands You Have...

Hands come in many shapes, sizes and textures. You should try to give your characters hands with an appropriate look. For instance, a woman's hand (right) will generally be more slender and smooth than a man's, while your average comic bad guy might have a hairy mitt with the odd chipped fingernail (as shown below). The most important point is that there can be a lot of character conveyed simply by the type of hands you choose to give someone (and while you should always try to be consistent, a weird combination of these three hands would be interesting). See, hands are more important than you thought!

Express Yourself

Another way that hands can help in storytelling is by enhancing expressions. A good actor uses body language to communicate a multitude of feelings and ideas, and so should a good comic artist. Look at the effect the addition of a hand has on Batman. In the sketch directly below, you can't tell if Batman's thinking, angry or confused. But by adding just one hand, you instantly realize that he's pondering something. Now, isn't that much better than just a word balloon saying "Hmmmm..."?

Same thing with the girl in Figure 3a who's been asked a question in history class. She doesn't look too confident, but in 3b, it takes a simple hand to make her look totally clueless (of course, she might be *acting* dumb). Remember: body language!

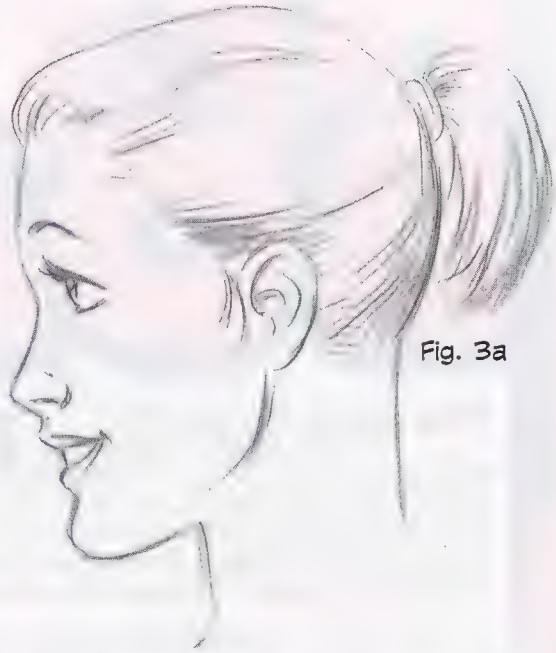


Fig. 3a

Fig. 3b

At the end of the day we are trying to create characters in which a reader can believe and identify. Using hands and body language is a subtle (yes, that means you won't get much credit for it) way of achieving this.

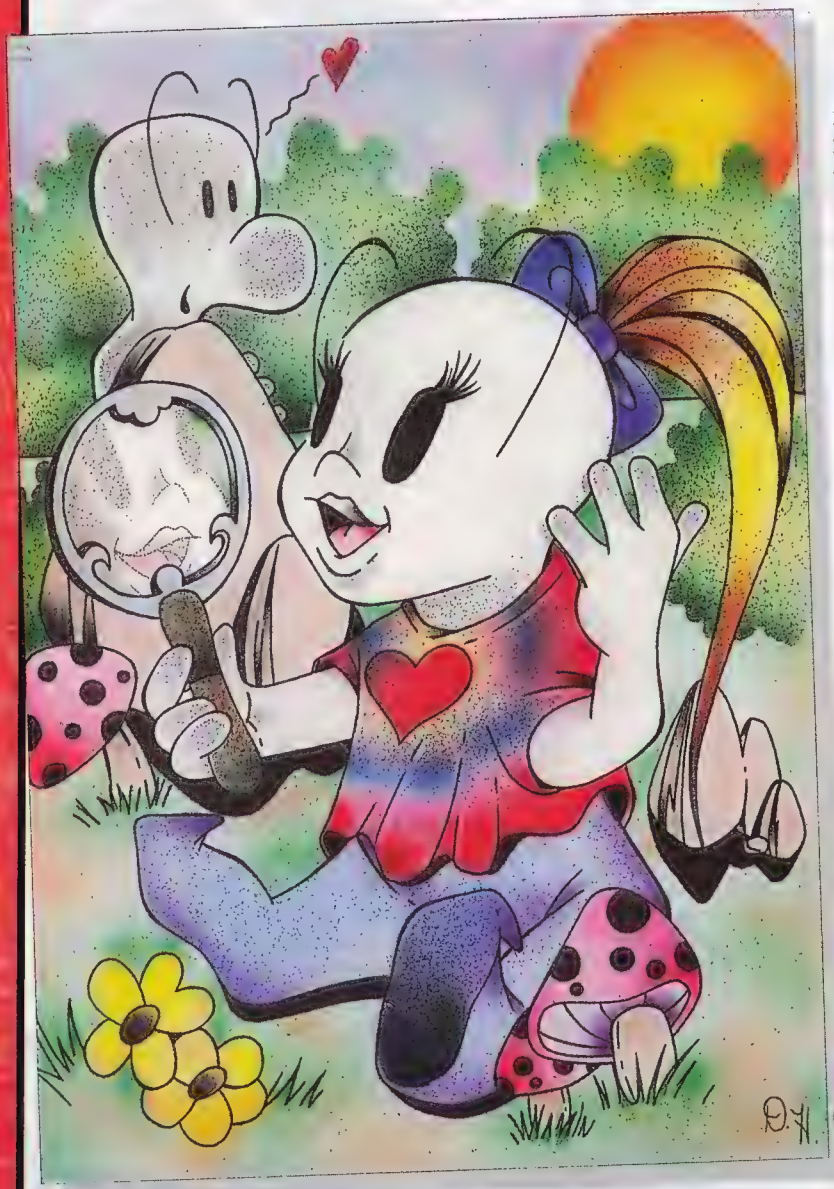
And there you have it. Hands. They're not easy, but when used properly they can improve a comic to no end. Besides, nearly every comic character (Even Aquaman!) has at least one, so you really ought to learn to draw the darn things. Best of luck!

Gary Frank's handiwork (groan) can be seen on a regular basis in WildStorm's funky teen comic Gen[13]. *Besides previously giving the Hulk his monstrous hands and Supergirl her slinky fingers, he's one of those rare artists whose last name is also a first name! How about that?*

Drawing BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for WIZARD READERS' ART

These are the winners of *Wizard* #70's "Bone Treasures" contest, in which we asked readers to show us what a female Bone would look like. *Bone* creator Jeff Smith chose the lucky Grand Prize winner, who gets (try to say all this in one breath) a dragon-sized Bone care package including a Red Dragon statue, a *Bone* #1, a *Bone Premiere Edition*, a *Bone* #13 1/2 Gold Edition, a *Bone Flipbook*, a copy of *Thorn: Tales from the Lantern*, a *Bone Sourcebook* (San Diego Edition), a Bone PVC, limited-edition Bone wall art, a *Wizard Bone* #13 1/2 Ace Edition and a *Wizard Bone* #1/2!!! The runner-up snags some limited-edition Bone wall art and *four* Bone posters. Congrats to our Grand Prize winner, runner-up and the 10 honorable mentions, who simply get bragging rights from our showcasing their art in the magazine.



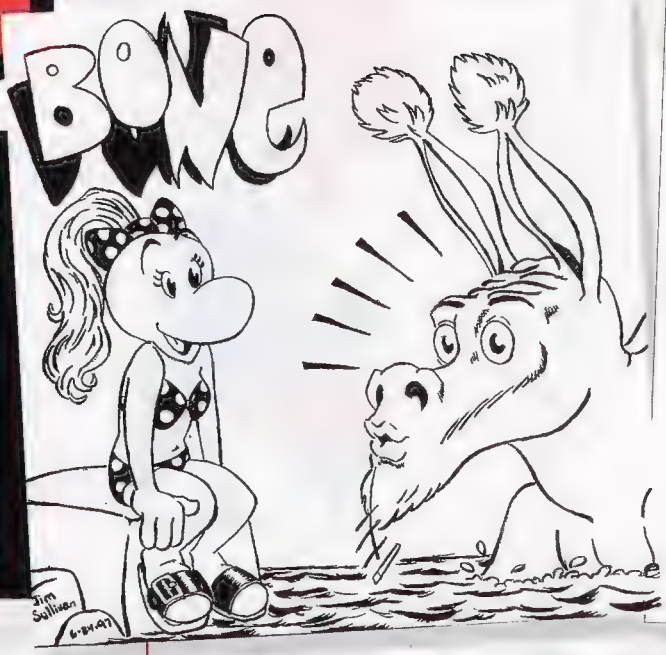
GRAND PRIZE WINNER

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT by
DERRICK HOLLOMAN,
Thomasville, N.C.

THE BOOTY
(just part of it)

RUNNER-UP



JIM SULLIVAN, Weymouth, Mass.

ERIC HARTMAN, Levittown, N.Y.

LEE SHEWERTON, Honolulu, Hawaii

JONATHAN REINFURT, Glen Ridge, N.J.

HONORABLEMENTIONS

Drawing BOARD

SHAWN KING, Charles City, Iowa

CHAD PORTER, Weston, Ontario, Canada

RANDY CHAFFIN, Chicago, Ill.

REID JOHNSON, Wailuku, Hawaii

DAVID CUSAK, Moscow, Idaho

SIEGFRED S. SANTILLAN, Silay City, Negros Occidental, Philippines

TOM BANCROFT, Davenport, Fla.

Want your art to appear on one of these four pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your Drawing Board entries to:

SUBMIT!

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but NOT neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include a color photo of yourself.** (No Polaroids, please.) All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contest, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

JOE MADUREIRA PRESENTS:

CONTEST

THE "Create a Monster for Battle Chasers" CONTEST

Battle Chasers is top 10 artist Joe Madureira's new creator-owned series coming from WildStorm's Cliffhanger Productions. The book is a fantasy-based sword-and-sorcery book full of dragons and other monsters. And Madureira's giving readers the chance to participate!

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One battle-boy will have the monster he creates drawn into an issue of *Battle Chasers*. He'll get to see his monster locked in battle and beautifully rendered by Joe Madureira. Plus, Madureira'll let the winner have the page of original art on which his monster appears.

FIRST PRIZE (10): Ten others each win a copy of *Battle Chasers* #1 signed by Joe Madureira and a copy of the *Battle Chasers* #1 variant also signed by Madureira.

Think you're up to the task? Good. Just create your very own monster. You can either draw it and send it in or, if you lack drawing skills, describe it in 50 words or less and send that in. Just make sure you attach it to the official entry form below. We'll review 'em, and pick the best based on creativity. Want a hint? The scarier and more disturbing the monster is, the better chance it has of winning. So add on those pincers, slop on the eyeballs, give it tentacles galore! Whatcha waitin' for? Get creatin'! Just remember, if you send in a drawing, make sure it's no larger than 8" X 11 1/4". And don't fold it!

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY JOE MADUREIRA AND THE LETTER "W."

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and put it in an envelope. Send to:
"Create a Monster for BATTLE CHASERS" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

THE PAPER CHASE

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, WildStorm Cliffhanger Productions, their immediate families and the doctor who did the implant surgery on Red Monika. What, was there a surplus of silicone you had to get rid of? Geez. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Create a Monster for *Battle Chasers*" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by May 29, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. "Madureira?" What kinda name is that, anyway? Winners will be notified no later than July 3, 1998. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about June 12, 1998.

For a list of winners, available after June 12, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Create a Monster for *Battle Chasers*" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

"Create a Monster for BATTLE CHASERS" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE MAY 29, 1998!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-Mail _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY?

School's In!

WIZARD #1/2 OFFER

GENERATION X®

The kids from Xavier's Institute for Higher Learning—Jubilee, Husk and Skin—have fought Emplate, the Phalanx and even Onslaught...but can they survive a day on the streets of Los Angeles? Find out in this exclusive #1/2 comic from the House of Ideas (Marvel, naturally) and Wizard Entertainment!

Don't be left out! All the kids in school will make fun of you if you don't read this exclusive, original *Gen X* #1/2 issue, so act now! Fill out the order form completely, insert three U.S. dollars into the envelope, skip last period, get yourself down to the post office and mail it all in!

Within the Generation X #1/2, you'll find these goodies:

- A brand-new story written by Larry Hama (*Wolverine*) and drawn by Alé Garza (*DV8*, *Gen*^{13} *Animated*)!
- This new chapter in Gen X history reveals a secret from the past that the X-teens will never forget!
- Exclusive Generation X Diary! Get a peek into the private lives of the Gen X kids!
- What's the most X-cellent part of all? This is a Generation X story you won't find anywhere else! This exclusive comic is available through this one-time *Wizard* offer only!

SO DON'T DELAY!

LEGAL TEXT OF THE NEXT GENERATION

No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope, up to twp comics per coupon. You may put additional coupons in the same envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $4.00, other foreign orders remit $6.00. All payment must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Entertainment. Offer good only while supply lasts. Please allow eight to 12 weeks for delivery. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Entertainment is notified in writing by June 17, 1998. Copyright ©1998 Marvel Characters Inc.

THIS OFFER EXPIRES JUNE 17, 1998!

SPECIAL TOY FAIR '98 MEGA BONANZA!

It was a toy lover's greatest dream. Virtually every toy maker, from bigwigs like Kenner and Toy Biz to upstart newcomers like WildStorm and Moore Action Collectibles, gathered in New York City in February for a whirlwind week of schmoozing at the American International Toy Fair. With gorgeous spokesmodels, banks of video displays, bright lights and a couple of smoke machines, each toy company tried to outdo the other with elaborate showrooms designed to hawk its wares. Just imagine a Luke Skywalker look-alike demonstrating the marvels of the new Power F/X X-Wing amid a sea of new Star Wars toys or a dimly-lit secret room guarding the new X-Files figures with the top-secret movie aliens trapped behind jet-black containment units. If it's gonna be a big toy in '98, you could see it at Toy Fair.

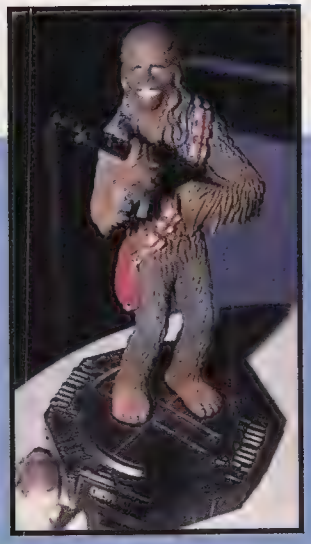
Sure, there were lots of great showrooms to see and interesting people to meet, but the most important part of Toy Fair was getting to see all the cool new toys. Here's just a taste of what was on display!

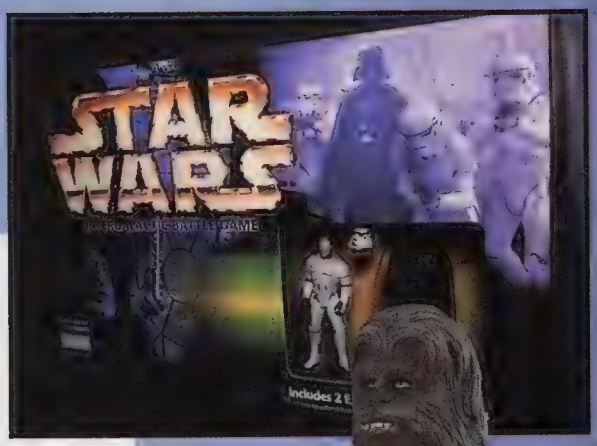
FORCE WORKS Kenner's new Star Wars line includes (from left) Lobot, Orrimaarko (Prune Face) and Tusken Raider with Bantha. The long-awaited Mon Mothma (above) finally has an action figure all her own.

PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRULD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED; MON MOTHMA COURTESY OF KENNER.

BY TOM PALMER JR.

Newest Spidey, X-Men & Surfer figures. . .Jason & Freddy too!





CHEWIE CENTER Chewbacca as Boushh's Bounty (right) is a new addition to the '98 line. Also, there's (above, clockwise from top left) large-sized Han, Chewie, Leia and Stormtrooper; the Star Wars Interactive Battle Game and Mynock Hunt 3-pack.

NEVER ENOUGH STAR WARS

The onslaught of new Star Wars toys just never ends. New figures on the way include **Mon Mothma**, a resculpted **Chewbacca as Boushh's Bounty**, **Lobot**, **Orrimaarko** (Prune Face), Death Star Droid, skiff guard Pote Snitkin and an AT-AT Driver. Later in the year, Kenner will unveil figures from the Expanded Universe, drawing from the wealth of Star Wars comic books, novels and video games for characters like Grand Admiral Thrawn, Imperial Sentinel and Leia Organa Solo. Also on the way are figures for **Han Solo and Tauntaun**, **Tusken Raider and Bantha** and a new Cinema Scene 3-Pack, **Mynock Hunt**, with Han Solo, Leia and Chewie in gas masks. And there's even more additions to the Epic Force line of large-size figures like a Stormtrooper, Han Solo, Princess Leia and Chewbacca. Oh, and don't forget to pick up the Star Wars Interactive Battle Game which has two exclusive figures: Darth Vader (with removable helmet) and Luke in Stormtrooper disguise with slicked-back hair. (He's so macho, ain't he?).

CHEWBACCA AS BOUSHH'S BOUNTY PHOTO COURTESY OF KENNER.

SPIDER-MAN BUG BUSTERS.

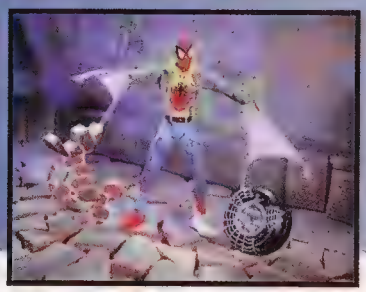
Spidey and icky bugs go hand-in-hand. For the Bug Busters line, there's (below, from top) **Jack O'Lantern**, **Silver Sable**, **Spider-Man** and the **Vulture**. Each figure comes with a projectile-firing bug accessory.

SPIDER-MAN SHAPE SHIFTERS

There's also Toy Biz's 7-inch Spider-Man Shape Shifters line, which lets you transform (below, from left) **Spider-Man** into a monster spider, **Venom** into a three-headed serpent and the **Lizard** into a mutant alligator.

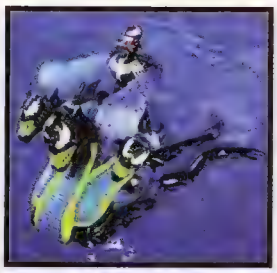
SPIDER-MAN STREET WARRIORS

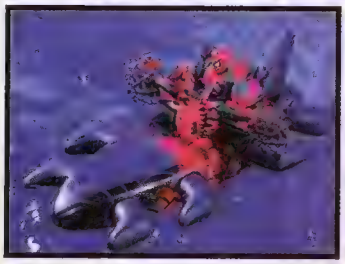
Two of Spidey's scariest foes finally get the action figure treatment with the Street Warriors assortment. This line includes (below, clockwise from top left) **Scarecrow**, **Spider-Sense Peter Parker**, **Street War Spider-Man** and **Vermin**.

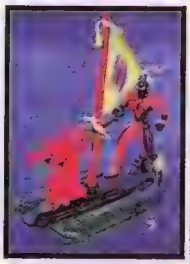


SPIDER-MAN WEB SPLASHER BLASTERS

Last year's Web Splasher line was a big hit with kids and collectors, so Toy Biz's diving back in again for the Web Splasher Blasters line, with inflatable vehicles that fire streams of water. Look for (right, clockwise from top left) **Hydro-Venom**, **Aqua Tech Namor**, **Wind Attack Spidey** and **Kayak Spidey**.







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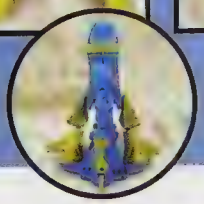
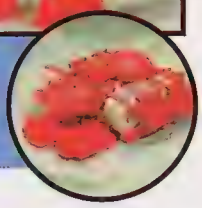



X-MEN SHAPE SHIFTERS

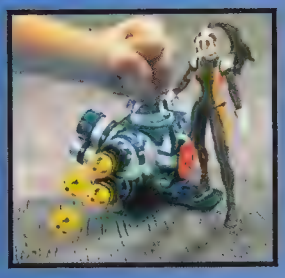
Just like Spider-Man, the X-Men get the transforming treatment with X-Men Shape Shifters. Flip some parts around and (from left) **Wolverine** becomes a wolf, **Morph** um...morphs into a missile and **Juggernaut** turns into a tank.

X-MEN BATTLE BLASTERS

It's the "Age of Apocalypse," but Toy Biz is calling this line Battle Blasters. Look for "AoA" versions of (below, clockwise from top left) **Cyclops**, **Wolverine**, **Jean Grey** and **Omega**.

X-MEN POWER SLAMMERS

Kids love beatin' toys, so they'll love these X-Men Power Slammers–just whack the special buttons and (below, clockwise from top left) **Wolverine**, **Master Mold**, **Rogue** and **Gambit** launch little projectile thingies.



X-MEN FLYING FIGHTERS

Strap on some missile-firing wings to your X-Men figures and have some high-flying fun. Yee-haw! X-Men Flying Fighters include (from left) **Maggott**, **Mr. Sinister**, **Cyclops** and **Jean Grey** (who was replaced with Wolverine at the last minute).

ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE COURTESY OF TOY BIZ.

X-MEN VS. STREET FIGHTER

Video games kick ass. The X-Men kick ass. Put the two together and you've got a double kick-ass concept. The next round of X-Men vs. Street Fighters figures pair up (clockwise from top left) **Juggernaut vs. Chun Li**, **Apocalypse vs. Dhalsim**, **Rogue vs. Zangief** and **Gambit vs. Cammy**.

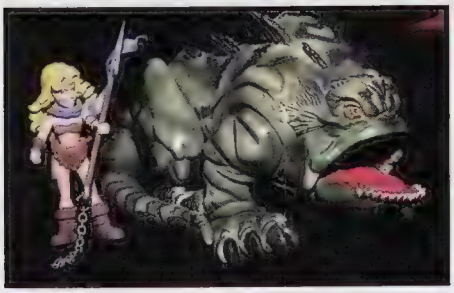
FAMOUS COVERS

Continuing the line of Mego-inspired 8-inch action figures, Toy Biz unveils the third series of Famous Covers, subtitled Marvel Milestones, with (below, from left) **Mr. Sinister**, **Black Widow**, **Falcon** and **Daredevil.**

FAMOUS COVERS, JUGGERNAUT/CHUN LI AND GAMBIT/CAMMY PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOY BIZ.

MARVEL'S MOST WANTED

You wanted 'em, you got 'em. Toy Biz serves up collector-styled (that means they're big) versions of (from left) **Spat and Grovel**, **X-Man** and **Blink**. X-Man and Blink make sense, but whoever requested Spat and Grovel should have his head examined.

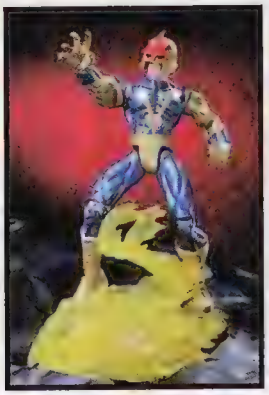


SILVER SURFER COSMIC POWER ALIEN FIGHTERS

Marvel's latest animated superstar, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's Silver Surfer, looks to be Toy Biz's next big thing. Look for the Alien Fighters line to pair the Surfer and other characters with alien creatures like (at left, clockwise from top left) **Solar Silver Surfer and Draconian Warrior**, an 8-inch **Galactus with Silver Surfer in Cosmic Orb**, **Ivar and Ant Warrior** and **Cosmic Silver Surfer and Pip the Troll**.

SILVER SURFER COSMIC POWER SPACE RACERS

The Space Racers line plants Surfer cartoon regulars on pull-back action space sleds. Look for (below, from left) **Molten Lava Silver Surfer**, **Super Nova**, **Adam Warlock** and **Ronan the Accuser**.



ALL SILVER SURFER, X-MAN AND BLINK PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOY BIZ

NEW BATMAN ADVENTURES

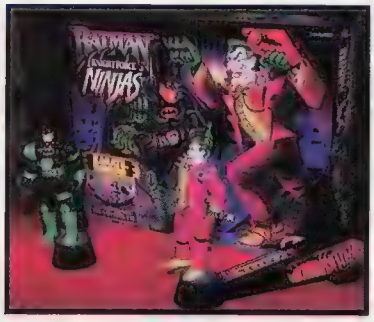
Kenner's pumped new life into its New Batman Adventures assortment. Look for the (below) **Creeper** and **Undercover Bruce Wayne.** Also in the line, (but not shown) are Jet Wing Batman, Battle Shield Nightwing, Street Strike Batman and an Arkham Asylum Batman/Two-Face two-pack.

LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT

More alternate universe versions of Batman and his supporting cast are on the way with new Legends figures, including (below, clockwise from top left) **Batgirl**, Dark Knight Batman, Lava Fury Batman and **Clayface.**

KNIGHT FORCE NINJA

Batman and Robin put their martial arts abilities to the test with this new line, full of push-button features and break-away accessories. Look for (below, clockwise from top left) **Azrael**, Battle Knight Batman and a Karate Fighters two-pack with Batman and the Joker to join Knight Warrior Batman, **Killer Croc**, Martial Combat Robin and Street Warrior Batman (not shown).



McFarlane Toys, maker of Spawn and then some, has a banner year ahead of it. After the success of last year's "Spawn" movie tie-in toys, McFarlane's gone Hollywood with toys based on this summer's "X-Files" feature film and "Species II," as well as classic movie monsters like Freddy Krueger and Jason.

KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS

Last year's KISS figures sold out left and right, so it's back to the well once again to dish out KISS Psycho Circus toys based on the monthly comic series. Each band member gets teamed up with his comic book counterpart in sets like **Gene Simmons with Ring Master** (left), Peter Criss with Animal Wrangler, Paul Stanley with the Jester and Ace Frehley with Stiltman.

MANGA SPAWN II

Manga Spawn was one of the surprise hits of last year, so it's time again for even more in 1998! Manga Spawn II will include **Manga Dead Spawn** (below), Manga Freak, Manga Overtkill, Manga Cyber Violator, Manga Beast and Manga Samurai Spawn.

DARK AGES SPAWN

Taking the Spawn mythos to another level, McFarlane Toys unveils Dark Ages Spawn, a medieval-themed Spawn line with new characters and concepts. Dark Ages Spawn will include the **Skull Queen** (below), the Raider, the Ogre, the Spellcaster, the Horrid and Spawn the Black Knight.

TODD McFARLANE'S MONSTERS SERIES 2

McFarlane fans want one thing: monsters. And they'll get an extra-big helping with the next wave of Todd McFarlane's Monsters, which will include the **Mummy Playset** (above), **Sea Creature Playset**, **Dr. Frankenstein Playset** and the **Phantom of the Opera Playset**.

MOVIE MANIACS

Fans have been clamoring for figures of **Jason** (above, left) and **Freddy** for years, and now McFarlane toys delivers. Throw in **Eve** (above, right), the female creature from "Species II" and you've got McFarlane's new Movie Maniacs line.

ToyFare Assistant Editor Tom Palmer Jr. didn't think Toy Fair was very fair when he was arrested for biting the bum of the Scary Spice doll.

ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE COURTESY OF McFARLANE TOYS.

stuff

COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's The Flash's Right-This-Instant Rice, Daredevil's smash album *Whistling in the Dark* or the Human Torch's home cremation kit, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* will strive to show you the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies.

In short, if it's cool, and if it's stuff, you'll find it here.

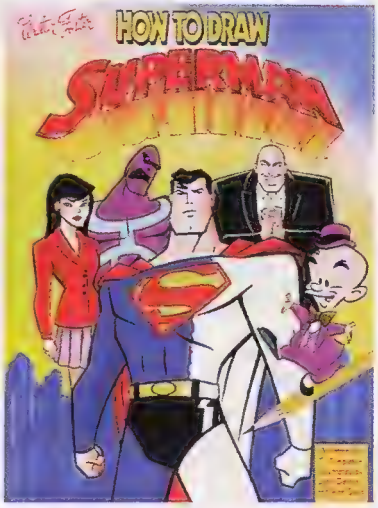
BLINDED! These grimacing martial artists will keep even the strongest sunlight out

DRAGON BLINDS

Keep the light away from your windows with a pair of Dragon Ball Z Venetian Blinds ($34). The blinds, done by Samurai USA, feature Dragon Ball character Goku and other Z fighters, fully painted and colored on bamboo slats. This product's available right now.

ANIMATING HEROES

Walter Foster Publishing and DC Comics show you how to draw Batman and Superman (and their friends and enemies) in the animated series style. *How to Draw Batman* and *How to Draw Superman* ($7.95 each) are written and drawn by the some of the best artists in the business: Ty Templeton, John Delaney and Ron Boyd. These books are available in bookstores everywhere.



DRAW, PARDNER! Artists Ty Templeton, John Delaney and Ron Boyd will show you how to draw Superman and Batman.

HOT STUFF!!!!!!!!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

DATA, BUSTED!

Legends in 3 Dimensions presents a cold-cast porcelain bust of everyone's favorite android, Lt. Cmdr. Data. The Data Bust ($149) features Data in a fully painted sculpture by Greg Aronowitz. The statue comes on a black base with the Star Trek logo displayed. The bust measures about 9.5 inches tall and is limited to just 3,000 pieces. It's available now, but you can also call Legends in 3 Dimensions at 1-888-LEGND3D to order one.

ANDROID ARTIFACT This android can't dream of electric sheep. But he'll look really cool decorating your room.

HELLBLAZIN' PORCELAIN

Vertigo and DC Comics present the 10-inch Hellblazer Statue ($195). The statue shows John Constantine (with cigarette in hand) sidling up to a bar. Designed by former *Hellblazer* cover artist Glenn Fabry, the statue is captured in cold-cast porcelain by sculptor William Paquet. It's available in June and limited to just 2,500 copies.

SMOKING SECTION Bet your local bar isn't anything like John Constantine's.

SINFUL LITHOGRAPHS

Dark Horse Comics presents five really keen-looking Sin City Lithographs ($20 each) featuring the ladies of Sin City in various poses. These black-and-white "Dames" prints all come on Conqueror high-white laid-finish acid-free stock. Each image was drawn by creator Frank Miller and measures 19 5/8" X 15 5/8". Look for 'em starting in May—or Miho (far right) will come looking for you!

BLACK AND WILD These three "Dames" will liven up your walls.

MIGHTY MAGNETS Astro City's second magnet set is cooler than the first. Is that possible?

ASTRO-NOMICAL MAGNETS

Look for the Astro City Magnet Set #2 ($6.95), coming this April. Each set includes three color magnets (Samaritan, Hanged Man and Crackerjack) with art by Brent Anderson and Alex Ross.

TICK-TOCKING FUN

New England Comics presents The Tick Classic Wall Clock ($29.99), available this April. This wall clock features the Tick proclaiming, "There's always time for justice!" and has a durable polystyrene case with a clear lens. The 8 1/2-inch quartz clock uses one AA battery (included).

SPOON! The Tick Classic wall clock offers prime-time fun.

IMPACT MODELING

China and Jazz, those demure beauties from *Double Impact*, can now be put together through the Double Impact Resin Model Kits ($125 each). The two model kits, one each of China and Jazz, are sold separately, but can be posed together through interlocking bases. Each kit is fully licensed by Rising Star Entertainment, and is 1/6 scale, measuring about 10 inches! The Double Impact model kits are available now, but you can order one through Puff-N-Stuff by calling (724) 523-8444.

MODEL BABES Heroines China and Jazz heat up the model-kit scene with two interlockable kits.

GLASSES GONE 'SOUTH'

It's time to settle down for a drink with the South Park Shot Glasses ($6 each). Each three-inch shot glass features a full-color image of one of the "South Park" TV show scamps (clockwise from top left), Stan, Cartman, Kyle or Kenny. These'll come in handy after eating some Cheesy Poofs. You can find them in April. (W)

SHOOT ME! The four lovable punks from "South Park" make destroying your liver a highly enjoyable experience.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special-order 'em for ya!

HEY! Are you a company putting out fun comic-related merchandise like statues, T-shirts, novelties, magnets, etc.? We'd like to preview 'em! Please send all info and sample products to:

Stuff
151 Wells Avenue
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With great power comes great responsibility...
A JAMES CAMERON FILM
SPIDER-MAN
THE MOVIE
TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX PRESENTS A LIGHTSTORM ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION A JAMES CAMERON FILM "SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE" LEONARDO DICAPRIO KEVIN SPACEY NIKKI COX ROBERT GUILLAUME
BILL PAXTON WITH MICHAEL DOUGLAS AS AND KATHARINE HEPBURN AS AUNT MAY MUSIC BY JAMES HORNER COSTUME DESIGNER DEBORAH L. SCOTT MUSIC PRODUCER RANDY GERSTON CO-PRODUCER AL GIDDINGS GRANT HILL SHARON MANN
FILM EDITORS CONRAD BUFF, A.C.E. JAMES CAMERON RICHARD A. HARRIS PRODUCTION DESIGNER PETER LAMONT DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY RUSSELL CARPENTER, A.S.C. VISUAL EFFECTS DIGITAL DOMAIN BASED ON THE MARVEL COMICS CHARACTER CREATED BY STAN LEE AND STEVE DITKO
RAE SANCHINI PRODUCED BY JAMES CAMERON AND JON LANDAU STORY BY JAMES CAMERON BASED ON THE BOOK BY MARVEL BOOKS DOLBY DIGITAL
NOT COMING THIS SUMMER
PARODY

video STUFF

By Matthew Danish

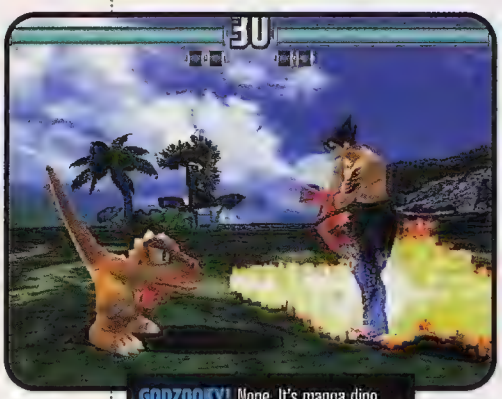
Video killed the radio star, but who's complaining? Certainly not us. Welcome to "Video Stuff," a column where we let loose with news, previews, reviews and game tips for the hottest, most spanktacular console and PC games around. Fire up the controllers...it's video game time.

SUPERMAN LIVES!

The Man of Steel is coming to the Nintendo 64 in June, courtesy of Titus, maker of the racing opus *Automobili Lamborghini.* According to Titus representative Nicolas Beraudo, Superman will face enemies such as Brainiac, Lex Luthor and Luzcal 5000. Based largely on themes and designs of the "Superman" animated series, the game features missions in different environments, including a fight scene in the parking lot of the *Daily Planet.*

'TEKKEN 3' GOES MANGA

Super-cute Japanese manga dinosaur Gon, the star of DC Comics/Paradox Press' adaptations (*Gon, Gon Swimmin'* and *Gon Color Spectacular*), is leaping into video games. While it's not yet determined whether Gon will be a selectable character or a hidden one, the little dinosaur is definitely exclusive to the PlayStation version of Namco's *Tekken 3*, say representatives at Namco. In early versions of the game, Gon is seen breathing fire and wearing tiny boxing gloves; whether these features will be included in the game's final version is unknown. *Tekken 3* will be out on April 30.



GODZOOKY! Nope. It's manga dino Gon, a bonus in *Tekken 3.*

GODZILLA SMASHES THE 'STATION

Godzilla will be stomping her (rumor has it the one-time "King of Monsters" lays eggs in the upcoming "Godzilla" movie) way onto PlayStations everywhere this summer, according to published reports. The as-yet-untitled game will be produced by Sony and will tie in to the "Godzilla" movie, scheduled to hit theaters this Memorial Day.

64 CD DRIVE...NEVER?

The hottest game for the Nintendo 64 in 1998? It's gonna be *Legend of Zelda64.* However, fans will be hard-pressed as to which format (cartridge or CD) they'll be playing it on.

Rumors abound regarding the Nintendo 64 CD drive add-on (known as DD)—most of them bad. It seems the drive will debut in Japan in June, but it might not be released in the United States until 1999. Worse, the add-on might not be shipped to America at all.

According to Beth Llewelyn of Nintendo of America, the United States' game releases (if any) have not been decided on yet, and will likely differ from the games released in Japan. Information regarding specific American market games is going to be released at the E^3 Electronic Entertainment Expo in May. If the CD drive makes it to the States, *Zelda* will be the first CD game released.

Nintendo hopes the technology will deepen existing Nintendo 64 games by allowing for many more levels and characters, as well as a more complex player-to-game interaction. Nintendo planners are even hinting at the production of games which will allow players to create extensively customized characters both before and during play. ■

ANTI-GRAVITY CARTS! Don't hold your breath for those *or* the N64 CD drive.

UPAHEAD→

Build a better monster...Find fun in 'Sin'...Spice Girls breed a Cutie and more, more, more!!!

MONSTER RANCHER

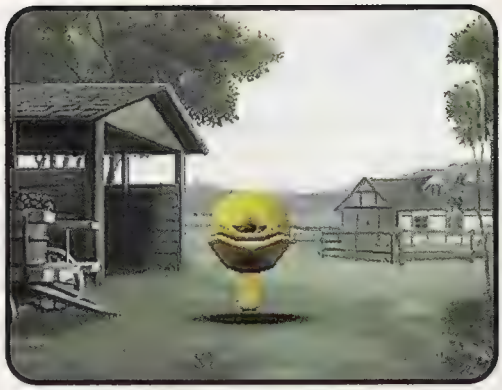
MANUFACTURER: Tecmo
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL/AVAILABILITY: $49.95; available now

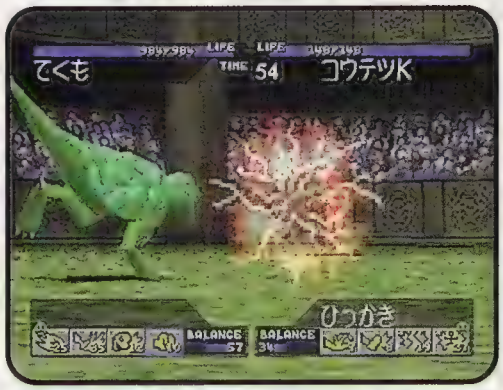
Dr. Frankenstein was a wimp. His patchwork monster would have lasted 26 seconds in *Monster Rancher's* battle arena.

Rancher is a curious game by Tecmo that allows gamers to buy or create and raise a menagerie of bizarre creatures before unleashing them for combat sport in a Roman-type arena. The game begins when the gamer, playing a breeder/trainer, decides to create a monster. Monsters, who vary in shape from snake-like crawlers and bird-winged bounders to enervated jig-dancing allosaurs—can be purchased on the open market or created *ex nihilo* (from nothing) by simply inserting any compact disc into the Sony PlayStation and pressing a button (see the "Cheat Sheet" sidebar for CD suggestions). Each monster packs a unique set of strengths and weaknesses; approximately 15 or so attributes measure a beast's strength, intelligence, speed, power, defense, etc. The heart of the game, raising a monster, involves such decisions as which foods, elixirs and potions to feed it and what jobs it should work to build up its attributes (from postal clerk to ski instructor to security guard). As a monster moves through its (limited) lifespan, time passes at a fairly speedy rate.

Every three weeks or so (in game time), players are asked to participate in a battle tournament. Here, a player's creation is pitted against random computer monsters in a fight-to-the-finish. Players control their characters' movements and attacks by entering a series of controller commands. Be forewarned, though; the monsters' movements often occur independently of any given commands. ■

TRY IT... If you like *Creatures* or *Sim Life* for the PC, you'll dig *Monster Rancher*.





MONSTERS...WE GUESS (Above, top) The product of Pac-Man inbreeding. (Above, bottom) "Ahh-CHOO!" Chunky mucus rules!

RAMPAGE WORLD TOUR

MANUFACTURER: Midway Home Entertainment
PLATFORM(S): Sony PlayStation/Nintendo 64
SUGGESTED RETAIL/AVAILABILITY: PlayStation version $49.95, N64 version price TBA; PlayStation version available now, N64 version available in March

An explosion rocks the Scumlab Toxic Waste Recycling facility of Toxic Hollow, Illinois. Three Waste Recycling Technicians George, Lizzy and Ralph metamorphose into volatile, cantankerous monsters (a giant ape, dinosaur and wolf, to be exact). Now, fires burn and bullets fly as the trio stomps through city after city in a vengeful fervor.

Midway's souped-up home adaptation of the arcade favorite *Rampage* is a classically enjoyable game. While lacking the sheer creative potential of *Monster Rancher*—here, there are only three basic monsters—*Rampage* provides a never-before-seen degree of pure city-stomping, people-eating mayhem.

A simple learning curve makes this game enjoyable; a player can pick up the controller without reading any directions and stomp the bejeezus out of every city that comes up.

While the Sony *Rampage World Tour* is certainly a game worth buying, the Nintendo 64 version might be even better. The Nintendo version is Rumble Pack-compatible, so players can *feel* those buildings crumble. Best of all, while Sony offers two-player action only, the Nintendo version allows all three monsters to stomp the city at once! If simple, violent solutions (mayhem) to complex problems (toxic waste disposal, imperiled employee relations) are appealing to you, *Rampage World Tour* will definitely satisfy. ■

TRY IT... If you like *Godzilla* (For the NES–remember that?) or *Rampage*, you'll like *Rampage World Tour*.

EAT YOUR FRIENDS! ...uh, y'know, in the *Rampage* game. That, and you can punch cars and step on stuff.

MORE→

SIN

MANUFACTURER: Activision
PLATFORM: PC
SUGGESTED RETAIL/AVAILABILITY: $49.95; Spring '98

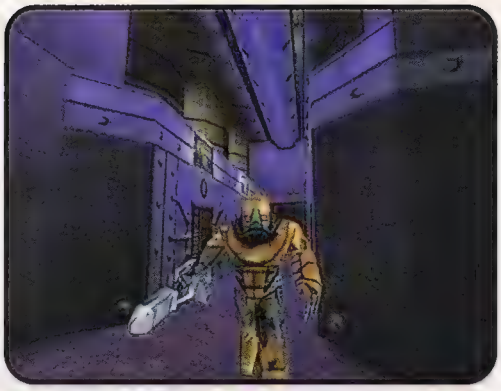
The year is 2097, and an addictive new drug known as U4 has been linked to the growing number of mutants turning up in the city of Freeport. Enter Colonel John Blade and his elite security force HARDCORPS. Does Blade have what it takes to bring down Elexis Sinclaire, the biochemist heading up SinTek, alleged manufacturer of the drug?

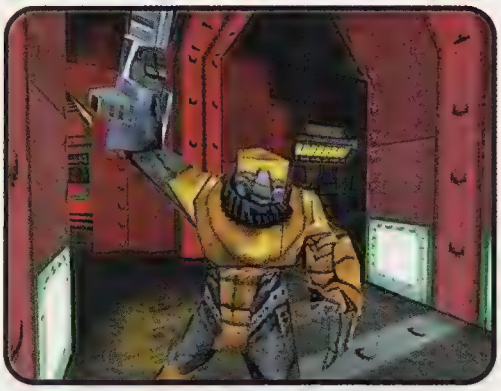
Welcome to the world of *Sin*, the newest first-person shooter to enter the rapidly growing fray. The saga of *Sin*, played out over six detail-intensive worlds, allows gamers to play as John Blade and, in multi-player action, as his sidekick CJ or the villainous Sinclaire. Developed by Ritual Entertainment using the versatile *Quake 2* game engine, *Sin* promises an unprecedented level of interactivity within a first-person shooter. Not only will player actions impact a particular level, but they will also govern which of the game's multiple conclusions will ultimately be reached.

TRY IT... If you like *Wolfenstein 3-D*, *Quake* or *Dark Forces*, you'll drool over *Sin*.

*Sin*ners won't have an easy time getting through these levels; they'll be up against computer-controlled opponents programmed with advanced AI (some are programmed to patrol an area, others are programmed to follow a player and still others which pack flashlights will have limited vision).

With the promise of unparalleled multi-player gaming, thanks to intricate levels and plenty of cool weapons, plus an anime film rumored to be in the works, *Sin* looks to find a massive audience this year. ■ ***Sin* review by Dan DiGiacomo**





"NEAR...FAR!" *Sin*, the 260 millionth first-person shooter.

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

CHEATSHEET

Monster Maker

Before players decide to pop in *Yanni's Greatest Hits* to create a monster in Tecmo's *Monster Rancher* (shown below right), *Wizard* recommends they buy a couple select CDs to generate these cool creatures...

Pulsating Deciduous Plant: Try Johann Sebastian Bach's *Book 1, The Well-Tempered Clavier, Preludes and Fugues*. The great composer's remarkable exercise produces a creature ripe with unbridled ambition. Your monster will go from calm, mellow limb-tearing to a crescendo of whup-ass.

A Wrestling-Masked, Legless, Grass-Hula-Skirted, Green Thing which Clutches its Furrowed Head in Anguish Every Two Seconds, Before Spinning Like a Top Beast. Insert Vanessa-Mae's pop-classical *The Violin Player* to reveal perhaps the strangest monster ever.

Extra Spicy: Just for fun, we tried out the Spice Girls' debut album *Spice*. It turns out this evil CD actually creates a cool special monster.

"On the Spice Girls CD, there is a monster called 'Cutie,'" Brian Hoisko, game counselor for Tecmo, explains. "How you obtain him is you must first get a monster to go on a summer expedition, which is held in the second week of July. You have to have a monster that has high intelligence. What he must do in the jungle expedition is find the 'Magic Banana.' Once he finds the Magic Banana, when he returns back to the ranch they're going to explain to him that he needs to spoil two monsters. Once you spoil two monsters, you've got to combine them with the Magic Banana, and the outcome will be an ape—a purebred ape. Save him, insert the Spice Girls CD again and [Cutie] should open up." ■

webline

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The Ultra Game Player's magazine Website features news, chats, photos and the latest info on games and machines.

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Visit the gamemaker of such spectacular Sony PlayStation and PC games as *Command & Conquer*.

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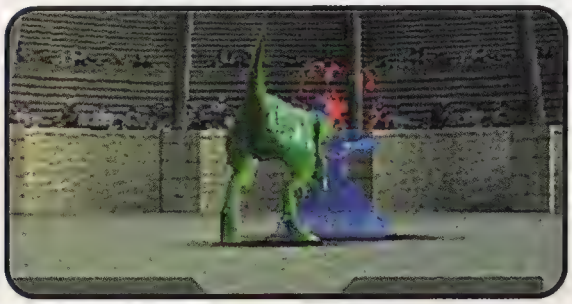
The mother of all video game Websites. This site has game reviews, previews, news, demos and the best letters section around. ■



Breakbeat techno that's a quick fix for drum addicts, and a big hit for beatjunkies.

"...currently cooler than an Eskimo's icebox in big beat circles." -NME

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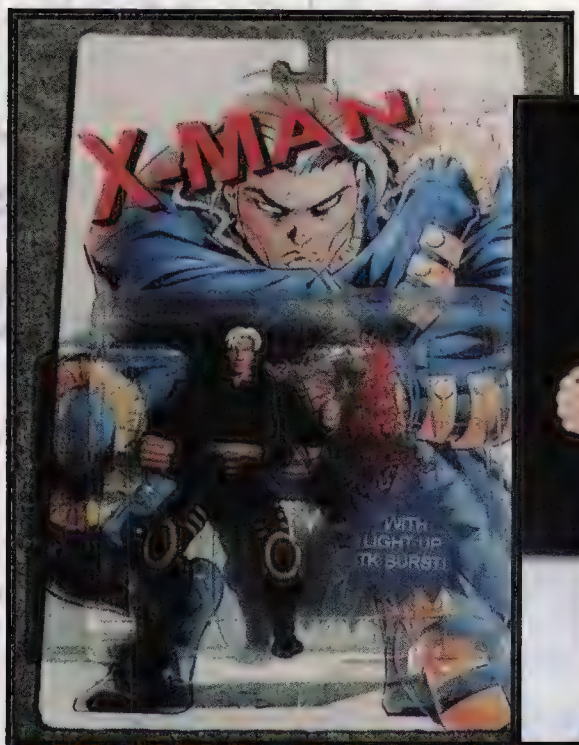
HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

HEY, QUIT YER WHININ', YA BABIES. They don't make figures of your favorite characters? You think you could make better ones than those that already exist? Either way, it's time to put up or shut up. The figures you see here were crafted by ordinary readers just like you. Starting with simple store-bought action figures, these go-getters combined a little imagination with some stuff from around the house. They will now be judged by the highest authority...us!



GRAND PRIZE WINNER

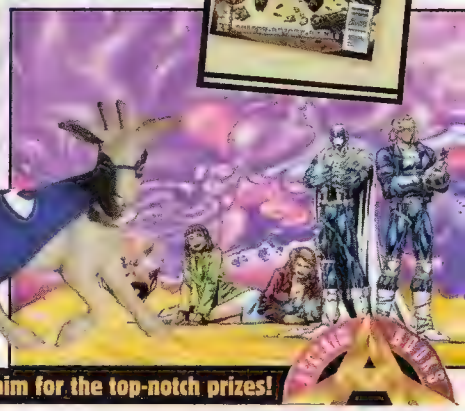
X-MAN

Brian Perone of Baton Rouge, La.

Brian made this figure out of cut-up apples, Play-Doh and custard pie. Ha! Okay, never mind, bad April Fools' Day joke. Heh. Seriously, X-Man is really just a repainted Toy Biz X-Men Classics Light-Ups Gambit figure, but darn, it looks cool.

WHAT WE GAVE AWAY!

The way-talented Grand Prize winner makes off with a Quantum and Woody variant Goat action figure, a regular-edition Goat figure, *two* Goat T-shirts and a *Q&W* second-edition TPB signed by the book's writer Christopher Priest and artist MD Bright, while each of the other creators scores a regular Goat figure. Kick-butt work, folks!



Many thanks to Acclaim for the top-notch prizes!

IMPOSSIBLE MAN

Thomas Lotz of Naples, Fla.

Taking the head of the Kenner Heads-Up Mask figure (from the Mask line, of course) and attaching it to a McFarlane Toys Spawn body, Impossible Man springs into being with a slight touch-up by acrylic enamel paints. And just remember, Impossible Man's agenda is to have fun, so make every day April Fools' Day and make Impy proud.

HAL JORDAN GREEN LANTERN

Craig and Julie Frey of Pittsburgh, Pa.

Say goodbye to one of them Toy Biz 10-inch Deluxe Fantastic Four Johnny Storm figures, add some paint and then say hellooooo to this Hal Jordan Green Lantern. Notice the subtlety of the right arm…it was removed and flipped over to face palm-down for Hal's power ring.

WITCHBLADE

Rosemary Ortiz of White Plains, N.Y.

Witchblade was born by adding a little of that Super Sculpey stuff and some paint to a basic Playmates WildC.A.T.s Voodoo figure.

MUFTAK (from "STAR WARS")

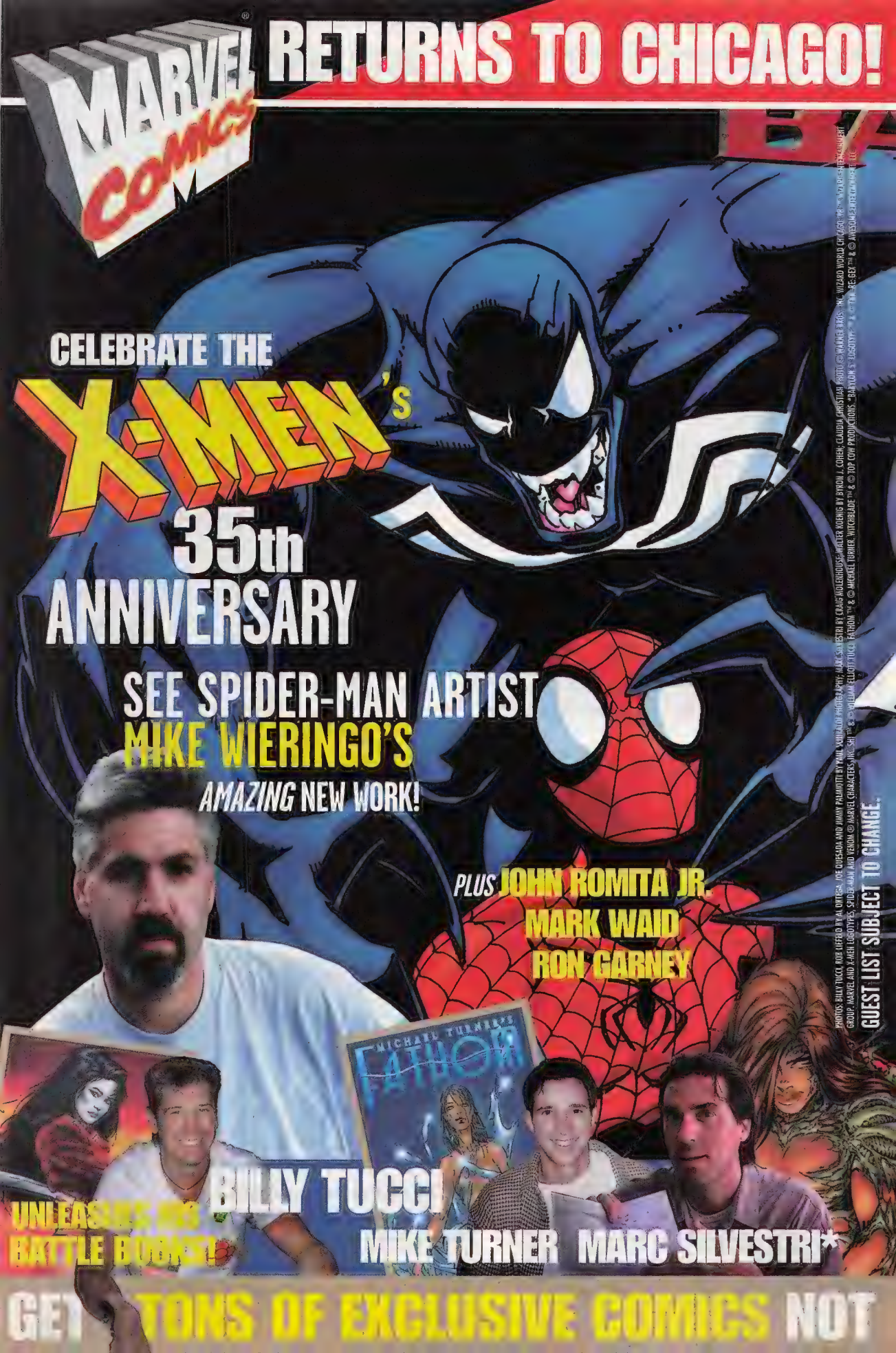
Jarrod Turner of Dyer, Tenn.

If anyone can imitate the sound this "Star Wars" cantina lounger makes, they deserve a Twinkie. And give Jarrod a dozen Hostess Ding Dongs for using some obscure sources, including a Kenner Chuck Norris Karate Kommandos Super Ninja, a wire frame and eyes from a "cheap dinosaur toy," to make Muftak.

Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs of your figure(s) (**No Polaroids, and put 'em in a cool or funny pose!**), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure(s), your full phone number (including area code) and even your e-mail address to:

SUBMIT!

Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118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CHARACTER PROFILE

SUPREME

BY MATTHEW BRADY

Don't mess with this guy. Why? As the juggernaut in the Awesome Universe, Supreme's super-strong, super-smart and can even travel through time! Sure, it sounds familiar, but read on—you might be surprised.

ORIGIN

AS A YOUNG BOY growing up in the Midwestern town of Littlehaven in the mid-1920s, Ethan Crane found a shiny meteorite that crashed near his home. As Ethan got closer to the meteorite, he fell ill, and was pulled to safety by his dog, Radar. Little known to Ethan, the meteorite was made of Supremium, and it turned both his and Radar's hair white. After the exposure, Ethan and Radar now possessed flight, enhanced senses, super-strength and invulnerability. As he grew, Ethan took the identities of Supreme-Mite and Kid Supreme, defending Littlehaven and the world from threats such as the demented genius of Darius Dax.

Discovering he doesn't age, Ethan (now calling himself simply Supreme) lives in Omegapolis, is the artist for the comic book *Omniman* and is headquartered at the Citadel Supreme, which constantly hovers over Omega City, hidden in an artificial cloudbank.

VITAL STATS

Real Name: Ethan Crane
Age: Mid-70s, appears in mid-30s
Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 260 lbs.
Hair Color: Silver-white
Eye Color: Blue
First Appearance: *Youngblood* (vol. 1) #3 (original version); *Supreme* #41 (modern version)
Title Currently Appearing in: *Supreme*
Major Enemies: Darius Dax, Hulver Ramik, Optilux, Shadow Supreme, Korgo the Space Tyrant and The Televillain

RECENTLY...

WHILE searching for his former Allied Supermen of America teammates, Professor Night and Twilight, Supreme became aware of the plot of Hulver Ramik and Optilux, who had stolen the souls of Prof. Night, Twilight and countless heroes from the 1950s and '60s in a plot to change the world of matter into light energy. Together with Prof. Night, Twilight and the rest of the reunited Allied Supermen, Supreme trapped and defeated the villains, freeing the heroes' souls in the process.

Shortly after that victory, Supreme found himself battling the aged Judy Jordan, who was actually harboring the consciousness of Darius Dax, Supreme's old enemy, long thought dead. Dax, as Jordan, imprisoned Supreme in the Hell of Mirrors, an interdimensional space that Supreme used to house his deadliest enemies.

Seeking more power, Dax transferred his consciousness from Jordan to the inanimate form of the robot villain Magno. Despite this tactic, Supreme escaped from the Hell of Mirrors and defeated Dax and his allies. In a last desperate act, Dax merged himself with the Supremium isotope in order to gain the powers of Supremium, and finally defeat Supreme. But Dax's plan failed, as the energy was too great to contain and Dax's body tore through the space-time continuum. Merging completely with the Supremium, Dax, now dead, crashed into 1925 Littlehaven, exposing little Ethan Crane to the Supremium's rays.

Supreme has since restored Judy Jordan's consciousness to a female Suprematon robot. However, Judy found that she could no longer relate to the human Supreme, and instead "married" the Suprematon named S-1. Together, the two left Earth and settled on a planet they named Supreatonia.

Since then, Supreme has faced some of the toughest challenges of his career, including a wild alternate past adventure with the League of Infinity, the escape of his deadliest foes from the Hell of Mirrors, and yet another apparent return of Darius Dax.

LOOKING AHEAD

SUPREME'S ROMANCE with Diana Dane takes a step forward in April's issue #59, when Supreme takes Diana on a tour of worlds. "He takes her to Prisonworld, which is made entirely of light," *Supreme* writer Alan Moore says. "Then they go to the year 2150, where they meet the female Fighting American IV. And then to the Supremacy, where all the other-continuity versions of Supreme and Diana exist. All the Dianas get together and have a little coffee morning to compare notes, something which makes Supreme slightly nervous."

All of Supreme's affection for Diane doesn't sit too well with his best friend, however. "In issue #60, Radar, who's been feeling left out, basically reaches dog puberty, and goes out to find his own love life," Moore says. "Those two issues will be a little lightness before #61, which is a fairly mind-bending encounter with the alien Supremium Man."

After that, Supreme will find a new civilization deep in the Himalayas with extremely familiar overtones in #62, which will serve as a break before stuff starts to hit the fan with issue #63. "*Supreme* #63 will be called 'Revelations,'" Moore says. "It will feature the return of a major villain, an interlude and dark clouds gathering for #64, which will be at least double-sized and features a massive war between two different cultures that has been building for a little time now."

And after that? "Right now, #64 may be my last issue," Moore notes. "It all depends on whether or not I can find a new line of stories I feel is interesting and worth developing. There's one possibility that [Moore's friend, writer/artist] Rick Veitch and I are talking about, so we'll see where that goes." (W)

When North Carolina-based writer Matthew Brady found a bright an' shiny meteorite, his *dog peed on it.*

HIGHLIGHTS

RECOMMENDED READING

SUPREME #41–Moore's first issue, which is where the current Supreme continuity begins. All previous issues will only serve to confuse you.

SUPREME #44–The end of the Allied Supermen...in a big way.

SUPREME #50–The beginnings of the Supreme/Diana Dane relationship, featuring Supreme recounting some of his more colorful relationships. "One of the better balanced issues so far," says Moore, "and [penciler] Chris Sprouse's first issue, which I thought looked wonderful."

SUPREME #52B–The conclusion of Moore's first full arc. Everything–and we mean *everything*–from the previous 11 issues is tied up in this issue, and it all makes perfect sense! If you're willing to sit through it, this is a satisfying story.

TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS

This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

In *ahem* honor of April Fools' Day, we proudly (?) present...**The Top 10 Heroes & Villains We Wish *Were* a Joke!**

1 TEEN IRON MAN

Okay, let's get this straight: After reading, oh, 30 years of Iron Man stories, we're suddenly told that Iron Man has been secretly manipulated by the villainous Kang since, oh, about day one or so? And he's just so garsh-darned evil that only death—and the sudden appearance of his younger, 17-year-old self from the past—can salvage his soul? Hello? Hello? Is anyone listening? Nope, they're not. So after teen Iron Man got shuffled off to the "Heroes Reborn" Universe, and was brought back to the original Marvel Universe, they just made him regular ol' Tony Stark again. Good.

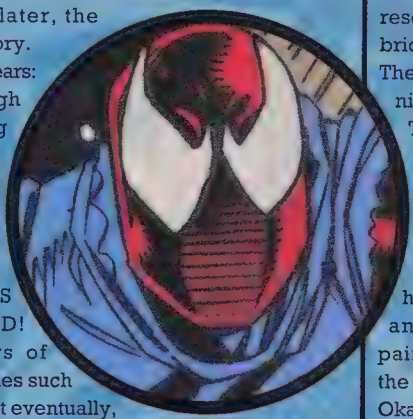
2 SUPERMAN RED / BLUE

Okay, let's get this straight: Some lame-ass story from the 1950s (that golden Superman era where every stinkin' story every month involved Supes stopping bank robbers and Lois Lane *almost* finding out his secret identity) is resurrected and foisted on fans at a time when we're already horribly sick of Electric-Slide Ice-Skating-Suit Superman? So DC gives us *two* bad Supermen to hate? And this is an improvement? And DC *doesn't* expect us to storm its offices with torches and pitchforks? Must...kill...the...pain! Close...eyes and think...of *Superman Forever*...in April. Sweet...release...from...horror.

3 SCARLET SPIDER

Okay, let's get this straight: Back in 1975, well before Dolly the Scottish sheep, they cloned Spider-Man. Three issues later, the clone died. End of story.

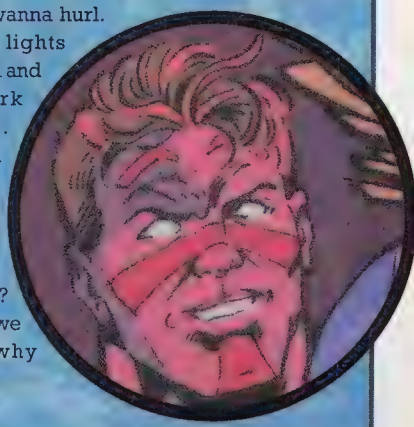
Flash forward 20 years: We're cruisin' through the '90s, wondering how "Beverly Hills, 90210" remains on the air when BAM!, we're hit with the "revelation" that the clone NEVER DIED! IT WAS SPIDEY WHO DIED! Suddenly, 20 years of Spider-history becomes such a convoluted mess that eventually, Marvel had to go back on its little "revelation" and say that it *was* indeed the clone who died in the first place. To sum it up in one word: Ugh.



4 GUY GARDNER, WARRIOR

Okay, let's get this straight: First Guy Gardner is a nice teacher-guidance counselor-type o' guy. He even helped rescue a busload of little schoolchildren from falling off a bridge. Then he goes into a coma and becomes a real jerk. Then Batman punches his lights out and he becomes so nice it makes you wanna hurl.

Then he gets his lights punched out again and becomes a jerk again. Now he's... some space alien guy who can turn his hands into guns and has his face painted up like he's the Ultimate Warrior? Okay, now where did we start again? And why should we care?

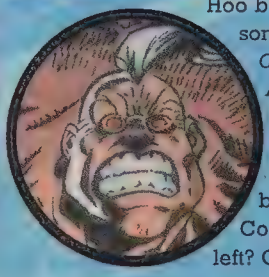


5 BROTHER POWER, THE GEEK

Y'know what there ain't enuff of in the world? Rag dolls that double as superheroes. This Raggedy Andy reject is a peace-lovin' hippie dummy charged with a soul whose only power is the message of brotherhood and peace. Nice notion, but it don't work too well when you're facing off against Wolverine, or even just some punk with a prison-made shiv.

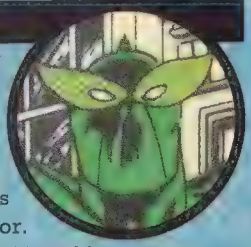
And incidentally, the word "geek" was originally coined to describe circus performers who bit the heads off of live chickens. Dig it.

6 GUIDO, THE STRONG GUY



Hoo boy. Where to start? One day, someone went to the *Giant Book of Comic Book Names That Have Already Been Taken* and found out that it was full. Yessirree, Bob. Every stinkin' superhero name possible had already been copyrighted by Lightning Comics or something. So what's left? Oh, we dunno. Maybe...Strong Guy? Yeah, that'll work. Then Marvel fit the world's tiniest human head to a body that looked like a jukebox with chest hair and everything was done. Good night.

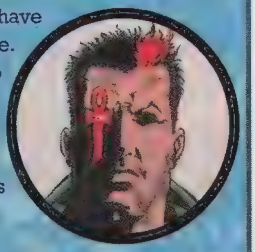
7 PLANTMAN



Tremble before the fury of...Plantman! He makes plants grow really fast and really big! Big whoop. So does sunlight, water and some well-placed fertilizer. Speaking of fertilizer, that's about all this chump is good for. Plantman can't even do a thing without his stupid-ass plant gun that he needs to make a friggin' fern grow in the first place. Wow. Dominion over plants. Via a gun. This guy definitely picked last in the "I'm gonna be a tough-guy villain" draft.

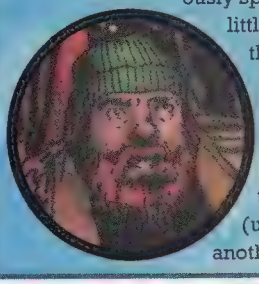
8 FATE

Someone shoulda told DC that the "grim 'n' gritty" motif went out of vogue a few years back. Maybe the horrid haircut, razor stubble (Oooh! Very "Miami Vice"!) and tough-squint expression would have sold in 1991, but those days are gone. Instead, DC rolled out this new, hip version of the classic Dr. Fate in 1997 to see if fans would take a bite. If they did, they puked it back up. The new Fate lasted 12 issues before a merciful (to us) death.



9 D-MAN

He stinks. Literally. D-Man is, politely put, a bum. He recently showed up in *Avengers* and smelled so bad that no one would sit by him. Not even Quicksilver. D-Man previously spent time as Captain America's little buddy and even went down the fated path walked by Cap's previous sidekick, Bucky. He was on an exploding plane that went down in the North Atlantic. But where Bucky had the good grace to die, D-Man (unfortunately) lived to stink another day. Pee-yew!



10 ANARKY

Boooo-ring! The most tired, overused premise of all (Youthful rebellion! Yeah, that'll get the kids buying!) takes form in Anarky. Unfortunately, Anarky's form makes him look like a Weeble. Or maybe a human fire hydrant. We only wish there were a line of dogs as long as the Great Wall of China lining up to pee on this 12-year-old punk who fancies himself the bringer of world revolution. Try losin' yer zits first, kid. Clearisil today, the world tomorrow.

MORT OF THE MONTH

ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

DOUGHBOY

Oh, God. Looks like Poppin' Fresh, that cute little Pillsbury guy, has finally gone Elvis.

Nah, don't worry. The future of cinnamon rolls is safe. It's only Doughboy, the malleable pile of...well...dough that is the brainchild of twisted geneticist Arnim Zola. Apparently, Zola thought that having something that looked like two tons of unbaked pie crust would aid him in one of his many schemes to kill Captain America. It didn't quite work, and Doughboy was eventually pounded to bits by Thor.

Just look at the way this Mort looks: If turds were white, they would be Doughboy.

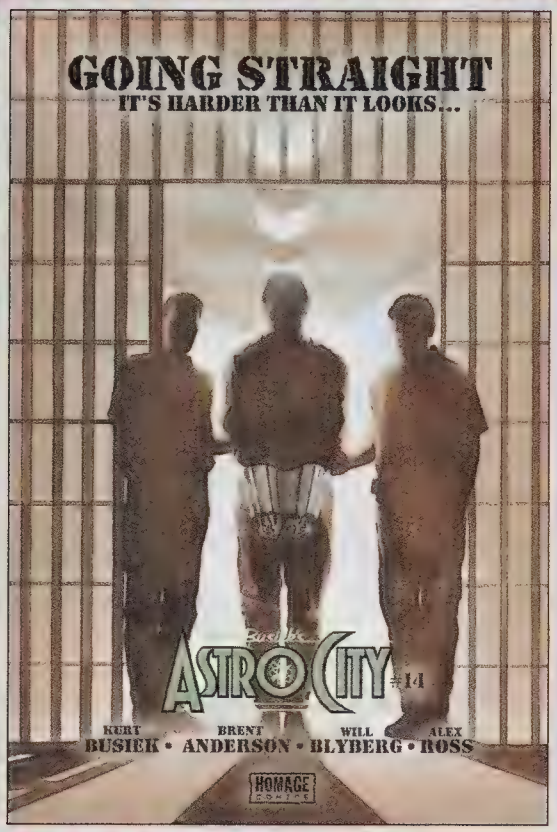
MORTOMETER

picks

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN APRIL

For this month, we asked a gifted psychic to predict the future of various comics! Check 'em out!

book of the month



ASTRO CITY #14

HOMAGE/IMAGE The slammer held his body, but couldn't cage his soul. When the superpowered Steeljack is freed from prison, he wants nothing more than to go straight. But redemption's a long, hard road to travel, especially for a known felon—and especially when he's made entirely of stainless steel. His quest will take him through Astro City's most dangerous neighborhoods, in an attempt to solve a mystery that just might spell his doom. By Kurt Busiek, Brent Anderson and Will Blyberg. **$2.50**

AKIKO #25

SIRIUS Happy Birthday! *Akiko* turns 25 this month, and if you ask us, it couldn't happen to a nicer comic. For the unenlightened masses, *Akiko* details a little girl's wacky space adventures with a host of misfit characters. (Think "Wizard of Oz" meets "Star Wars.") To help celebrate, this 32-page issue spotlights the mysterious floating head Poog in a solo adventure, along with a selection of small tales on the rest of the kooky cast. By Mark Crilley. **$2.95**

AQUAMAN #45

DC COMICS There's a traveler's advisory in effect for the watery paradise of Poseidonis. Apparently, the sea god Triton's been spotted heading for the city, sporting a mad-on for Aquaman the size of the *Titanic*. Triton's a living, breathing, card-carrying sea god, and Aquaman? Heck, he's just a long-haired hero with a hook for a hand. Can anyone say "sushi"? By Peter David, Bill Mumy, Jim Calafiore and Peter Palmiotti. Noted psychic Howard (From La Toya Jackson's Psychic Network—only $3.99 a minute!), armed with only a deck of Tarot cards and a quick wit, foretells of much danger under the seas: "There's the symbol of the UFO here. It shows up as something that would be ideal and interesting to the readers." **$1.95**

THE AVENGERS #5

MARVEL Earth's Mightiest Fakes? The heroes in the Squadron Supreme believe the current Avengers are mere shams, and they're willing to resort to mindless violence to prove their theory. Did the real Avengers die fighting Onslaught? Who cares? As long as it gets these two superteams at each other's throats, we don't care if the Avengers are the Hanson Brothers in disguise. Um, forget we said that. By Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey. **$1.99**

BATTLE CHASERS #1

CLIFFHANGER/IMAGE Sword-and-sorcery meets high-adventure sci-fi in the strange world of the Battle Chasers. When a dark force threatens their land, Garrison the swordsman, Knolan the sorcerer, Calibretto the war-golem and Gully the super-strong girl must put aside their hatred and distrust of one another to engage in some brutal antics and ensure this series doesn't end after its first issue. By Joe Madureira, Munier Sharrieff and Tom McWeeney. **$2.50**

MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

CAPTAIN AMERICA #6

MARVEL Beware! Your next door neighbor, your mom—anyone—might be a shape-changing Skrull hell-bent on world domination. These evil aliens have launched an invasion of Earth, and in this troubled hour, America turns to its greatest hero, Captain America. Funny thing, though—Cap's not too keen on stopping the invasion... By Mark Waid, Dan Eaglesham and Scott Koblish. **$1.99**

CONCRETE: STRANGE ARMOR #5 (OF 5)

DARK HORSE Never trust an alien. If they're not invading (see *Captain America* #6), they're kidnapping people and putting their brains in concrete bodies—just like they did to speechwriter Ronald Lithgow. Now reborn as Concrete, Lithgow's been poked and prodded by government forces seeking to exploit him. Escaping captivity for the second time, Concrete must deal with his past if he's to have any future. By Paul Chadwick. **$2.95**

DANGER GIRL #2

CLIFFHANGER/IMAGE Super-slinky secret agents Abbey Chase and Sydney are off in gay Paris, in a car chase to rival those "Cannonball Run" flicks. Meanwhile, their Danger Girl partner Natalia is in Russia doing stuff so secret we'd swallow a cyanide capsule before revealing it. By J. Scott Campbell, Andy Hartnell and Alex Garner. "Something keeps popping up here in the reading very strong," Howard the psychic enthuses. "There should be a lot of potential for success for a female lead. I'm basing this on what I'm picking up outside the reading, like 'Xena' and all these things happening on TV right now. The cards keep showing symbols of this. The feeling, psychically, is this is a direction to go in, since I do see symbols here showing increasing female readership throughout '98 and into the future." **$2.50**

DESPERADOES #5

HOMAGE/IMAGE Some memories refuse to die (like that bad bean burrito we ate for breakfast). When the Desperadoes mosey into a new town, a horrible train accident involving an old friend stirs up the specters of the American Civil War. One member of the team's already been through the bloody conflict, and he ain't so sure he wants to do it again. And what's so civil about war, anyway? By Jeff Mariotte and John Cassaday. **$2.95**

FANTASTIC FOUR #6

MARVEL These are strange days for the Fantastic Four. After fighting the evil Crucible, the Invisible Woman finds herself tempted by something from her Invisible Girl days, the FF battle an unexpected threat, and Iron Fist and the Heroes for Hire show up for some mercenary mayhem. By Chris Claremont, Salvador Larroca and Art Thibert. Our psychic pal Howard had this to say about the Invisible Woman's temptation: "What the cards show in that question is that it's going to have something to do with temporal powers. In other words, something to do with materialism, greed. I guess it has to do with material rewards, temptation in this area." **$1.99**

THE FLASH #138

DC COMICS "Human Race," Part 3 (of 3). Speed kills. And here, that's a bad thing. A *very* bad thing. Y'see, Flash is in a life-or-death sprint against the speedster alien Krakkl, and the loser's world goes bye-bye courtesy of some omnipotent beings. Has *The Flash* finally run its course? By Grant Morrison, Mark Millar, Paul Ryan and John Nyberg. **$1.95**

GANGLAND #1 (OF 4)

VERTIGO/DC COMICS It's a comic book you just can't refuse. Murder, love and loyalty are the order of the day in

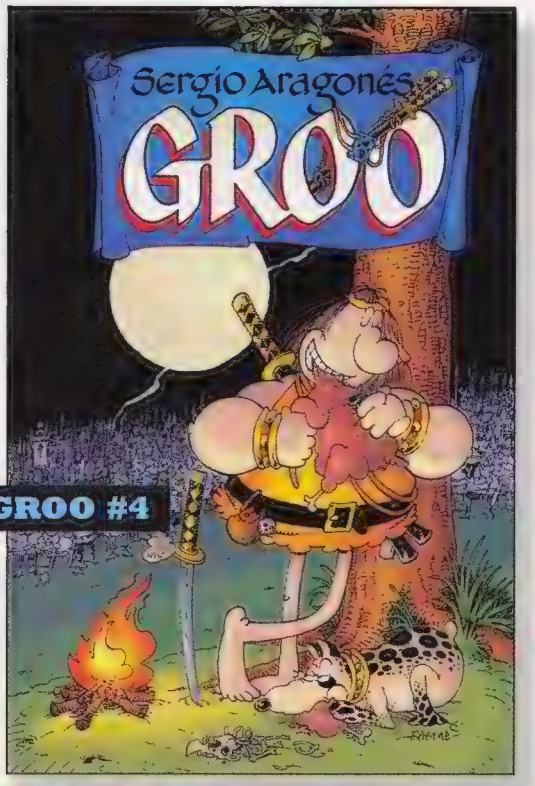
this twisted anthology on organized crime. This ish sees a mob informant's new lease on life, revenge in the snowy streets of New Russia, a trail of white powder from China to New York, and a shocking suicidal hit at the wedding of a major mob boss' daughter. By Peter Kuper, Dave Gibbons and more. **MR $2.95**

GON COLOR SPECTACULAR

PARADOX PRESS/DC COMICS Bad puns, we love ye! We've Gon crazy for the hysterical adventures of the spunky little dinosaur named Gon. This ish collects six of Gon's greatest stories—during them, he is struck by lightning, meets the humongous "King Bear," gets a huge set of antlers and becomes very, very sleepy. Aww... By Masashi Tanaka. **$5.95**

GREEN LANTERN #99

DC COMICS The good news: The Green Lantern Corps is back! The bad news: They're really, really evil. The gooder news: Heck, it's happening in the 30th century. The badder news: GL Kyle Rayner's trapped there and knocked unconscious. Since the Legion of Super-Heroes ain't much help, it's up to a certain mystery guest in a Green Lantern costume to save the day. Hmm...who could it possibly be? By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Terry Austin. **$1.95**



GROO #4

GROO #4 (OF 4)

DARK HORSE Mathematical formulas. Scientific theories. The secret to David Hasselhoff's success...the world is at Groo's fingertips. Until the idiot-turned-genius barbarian once again becomes dumber than a meatball sandwich. By Sergio Aragonés and Mark Evanier. **$2.95**

HITMAN #27

DC COMICS "Who Dares Wins," Part 5 (of 5). Superpowered hitman Tommy Monaghan is hip-deep in a 10-foot pool of trouble. British soldiers from the Special Air Service are out to kill him as revenge for a "friendly fire" accident. Tommy's gotta make a desperate last stand, even though they've got the edge in manpower, gunpower and brainpower. And what's so friendly about fire, anyway? By Garth Ennis, John McCrea and Garry Leach. **$2.25**

IRON MAN #5

MARVEL Isla Suerte ("Lucky Island") is about to become Isla Muerte ("Death Island"), unless Iron Man can stop a massive volcanic eruption triggered by the criminally inclined Firebrand. Sporting a new look and attitude, Firebrand's set on turning the island paradise into a cinder—which is real bad news for Tony Stark's friend Jim Rhodes and his no-good cousin Morgan Stark, who're both trapped on the resort deathtrap. By Kurt Busiek, Sean Chen and Eric J. Cannon. Tony Stark returning to his boozin' alcoholic days? Howard the psychic says nay! "I think the temptation should be there and he should waver back and forth—like an Achilles' heel type of situation. The cards show that it should be played on, but he shouldn't ever lapse completely back into it." **$1.99**

JLA #19

DC COMICS The Justice League's under attack by the foul Julian September and his probability-warping Engine of Chance. September's lost control of the Engine, though, and the Leaguers are systematically fading from existence. Who's going to save our heroes from oblivion? Hmm. Maybe a Justice Leaguer from waaaay back. By Mark Waid, Howard Porter and John Dell. The mystery Justice Leaguer? Our psychotic...uh, psychic Howard says, "Interestingly enough, this shows up as Earth-based, whatever that means. There's a card here of Earth and this would be, I think, related to—I don't know, I guess some kind of creature made from earth in some way. And it would be a character with omnipotent powers, so to speak. I would see it here from the cards as quite a powerful character." **$1.95**

JLA: YEAR ONE #6

DC COMICS Join the Brotherhood of Evil and in no time you'll be robbing, killing and cheating on your wife by sleeping with the Brotherhood's female interns! When the Brotherhood stomps the newly formed Justice League, the Doom Patrol steps in. And it's a good thing the Patrol members have mysteriously acquired the Justice Leaguers' superpowers, 'cause they're sure gonna need 'em. By Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Barry Kitson and Michael Bair. **$1.95**

KA-ZAR #14

MARVEL In the courtroom of love, Ka-Zar's no Perry Mason. His wife Shanna's been granted incredible terraforming powers by the High Evolutionary and she plans on leaving Earth with the dirtbag. Unless Ka-Zar can do some fancy foot- and brainwork, his wife'll be gone and the Savage Land'll be destroyed. By Mark Waid, Christopher Priest, Andy Kubert, Kenny Martinez and Jesse Delperdang. The cards see...trouble for Ka-Zar. "[Shanna] is going to flee Earth," sayeth our resident psychic Howard. "She's going to meet up with another female and they're going to form a team." We wonder what *kind* of a team... "I guess part of the storyline would have Shanna keeping on-and-off contact with [Ka-Zar] in the future." **$2.99**

MAJOR BUMMER #11

DC COMICS The funniest book of the year takes a decidedly grim turn as the musclebound poster boy for slackers, Lou Martin, and his annoying superhero acquaintances take the long dirt-nap—as do all the title's villains. Yes, this issue sees everyone die! So what's this mean for *Major Bummer* #12? Either massive resurrections or a lot of white pages! By John Arcudi, Doug Mahnke and Tom Nguyen. **$2.50**

NIGHTWING #21

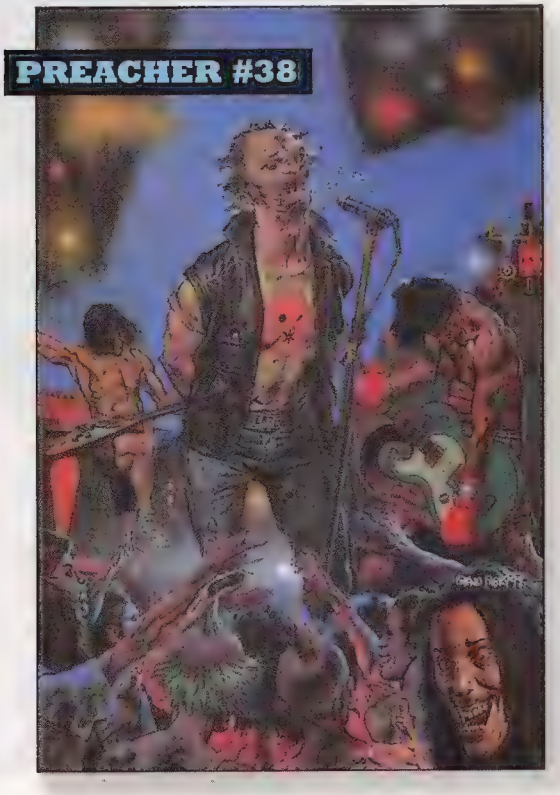
DC COMICS The triumphant debut of Blüdhaven's new hero Nite-Wing is interrupted by a fatal hail of gunfire. Now, Nite-Wing is dead weight (literally), which causes endless headaches for the real Nightwing. And when it's time to come home and relax as Dick Grayson, Nightwing learns his apartment's been condemned. Calgon, take us away! By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. Our psychic pal Howard had this to say about Nite-Wing's demise: "Something here shows a hologram—I'm picking up different symbols about holographic technology. His death would be related to a hologram in some way. And I'm not really sure how that would work, but there's definitely symbols of light—it could be lasers—and holograms." **$1.95**

POISON ELVES #34

SIRIUS Still hiding out from, well, just about everybody, that assassin elf Lusipher is biding his time with the demented wizard known as Tenth. Seems this wacky wizard has a real sharp sense of humor. And while he disguises Lusipher, Lus gets in touch with his feminine side. By Drew Hayes. **$2.50**

PREACHER #38

VERTIGO/DC COMICS In the bloody aftermath of "War in the Sun," the evil Starr wakes up to unpleasant surroundings, Tulip and Cassidy are bonafide messes, and life


PREACHER #38

newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

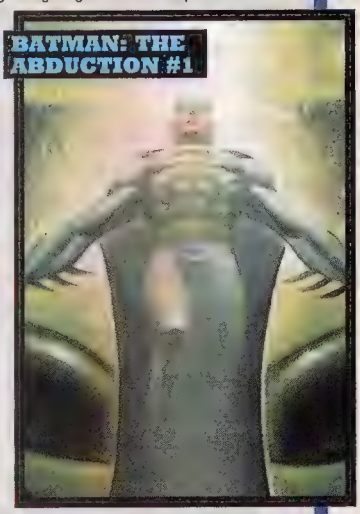
ADVENTURE STRIP DIGEST #1 **(Image)** Detective Rob Hanes likes his mysteries the way he likes his eggs–hard-boiled. Here, he heads to Hong Kong for a blackmail case that may just involve his new employers. **$2.95**

ALTERED IMAGE #1 **(Image)** Witchblade, Spawn, the Savage Dragon, ShadowHawk, Majestic and The Maxx unite to form a superteam in a reality gone wonky. **$2.50**

BATMAN: GORDON OF GOTHAM #1 **(DC Comics)** Years ago, Gotham City's Police Commissioner Jim Gordon worked as a Chicago cop–until he was blackmailed into resigning. Now, it's Gordon's chance for revenge. **$1.95**

BATMAN: GOTHAM ADVENTURES #1 **(DC Comics)** In this animated-style tale, Batman, Robin, Nightwing and Batgirl have to protect the Joker, who's got a $50 million bounty on his head. **$2.95**

BATMAN: THE ABDUCTION #1 **(DC Comics)** During a high-speed car chase, Batman is blinded by a bright light and wakes up four hours later in the Batcave. Did aliens kidnap the Dark Knight? **$5.95**


BATMAN: THE ABDUCTION #1

C•23 #1 **(WildStorm/Image)** In the far future, humans are fighting for survival against a new species, the Angelan HyBreeds–but those in power ain't telling all they know about the conflict. **$2.50**

CONAN: THE RIVER OF BLOOD #1 **(Marvel)** Adventurer barbarian Conan and his main squeeze Valeria face death in the form of snapping crocodile jaws and a potentially hostile wizard. **$2.50**

THE CROW/RAZOR: KILL THE PAIN #1 **(London Night)** Goth vigilantes The Crow and Razor form an unholy alliance to purge the filth from Queen City. **MR $3.00**

FIGHTING AMERICAN: COLD WAR #1 **(Awesome)** Time has flown over the cuckoo's nest, as Fighting American's pitted against a Silver Age version of himself. **$2.50**

FURY/AGENT 13 #1 **(Marvel)** Super-spy Nick Fury might not be as dead as the world believes. S.H.I.E.L.D. agent Sharon Carter is searching for Fury, and if she finds him, he's a dead man for sure. **$2.99**

JINX: BURIED TREASURE SPECIAL #1 **(Image)** Female detective Jinx gets the star treatment as hot writers and artists take turns telling hip tales of her exploits. **$3.95**

MARVEL UNIVERSE #1 **(Marvel)** Flash back to the dark days of WWII, when Captain America and his allies leapt into the fray to recover nuclear material stolen from the atom bomb-producing Manhattan Project. **$2.99**

MENACE #1 **(Awesome)** Transformed into a powerful female warrior, Menace is trapped in the middle of a war between Heaven and Hell. **$2.50**

SEEKER 3000 #1 **(Marvel)** A new world awaits the crew of the spaceship *Seeker 3000*–if only they can find it before mistrust kills them all. **$2.99**

SNOWMEN² #1 **(Avatar)** Two Snowmen (thankfully not named Snowman Red and Snowman Blue) express their alienation by smashing each other in the mouth. Repeatedly. **$3.00**

SUPERMAN VILLAINS SECRET FILES #1 **(DC Comics)** Lex Luthor tells a scary bedtime story to his daughter about the early days and shocking secrets of Superman's enemies. Hey, Lex–ever hear of *The Little Engine that Could*? **$4.95**

in Utah's a lot more...radioactive. Yep, things are basically back to normal. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $2.50**

QUANTUM AND WOODY #15

ACCLAIM "Magnum Force," Part 2 (of 4). Quantum and Woody, having been severely trounced, are now the prisoners of Terrence Magnum's toady War Locke. And while the superdudes suffer through their captivity, a host of juicy secrets will be revealed about their origins and fathers' deaths. By Christopher Priest, Mark Bright and Greg Adams. **$2.50**

ROBIN #54

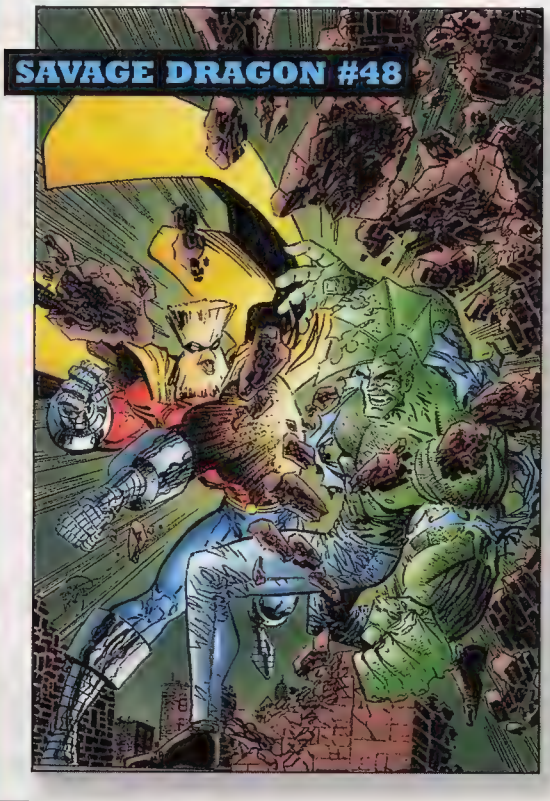
DC COMICS Two women plus one hero equals..."Three's Company"! While Jack and Chrissy are locked in the bathroom, Janet accidentally orders six cases of...whoops, wrong story. Anyway, Robin's ex-girlfriend Ariana is missing, and the babealicious Spoiler wants him to get her superhero costume from her mom's earthquake-destroyed house. If Robin helps the Spoiler, he's gonna find the young lady's father, the evil Cluemaster, waiting in ambush. By Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Stan Woch. **$1.95**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #63

VERTIGO/DC COMICS "The City," Part 3 (of 4). Truly, the butler didn't do it. Humphries, the faithful manservant to Wesley Dodds (the Golden Age Sandman), discovers a horrible fate awaits his closest relative—something more deadly than watching "Spice World" twice! Anyhoo, Humphries heads off to Queens, N.Y., to stave off the disaster. By Steven T. Seagle and Guy Davis. **MR $2.50**

SAVAGE DRAGON #48

IMAGE "Unfinished Business," Part 1 (of 3). Why'd the superpowered chicken cross the road? To kick the Savage Dragon's ass! When the feathers fly between the killer



alsoshipping

MORE BOOKS TO GET

ALPHA FLIGHT #11 (Marvel) Good things come in small packages, as the miniscule Micronauts join Alpha Flight to save not one, but two worlds. **$1.99**

BATMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) The Dynamic Duo rushes to rescue commuters stuck in a subway car before the villainous Ratcatcher's rodent army can gorge itself silly in *Batman* #555. And over in *Detective Comics* #722, Batman's wracked by feelings of depression and helplessness. **$1.95 each**

DEADPOOL #17 (Marvel) Super-secret and shadier than a tree, lawyers Landau, Luckman and Lake reveal their plan for Deadpool. **$1.99**

DIVINE RIGHT: THE ADVENTURES OF MAX FARADAY #7 (WildStorm/Image) Trapped in a strange dimension, Max Faraday and Devan Lawless are sitting ducks just waiting to be picked off by the evil Rath. **$2.50**

GEN^{13} BOOKS (WildStorm/Image) A new villain and (maybe) death await the Gen^{13} kids in *Gen^{13}* #28, while in *Gen^{12}* #3, Special Agent Morgan discovers a heapin' helpin' of secrets about Internal Operations. **$2.50 each**

MARVEL ANNUAL '98 STARRING: MACHINE MAN & BASTION (Marvel) While the genocidal bastard Bastion's origin is revealed, he fights the technological terror Machine Man. **$2.99**

SPAWN #73 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) Spawn, the Heap and detectives Sam and Twitch are trapped in a circle of death. **$1.95**

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS (Marvel) Spider-Man's still fighting under four new identities–Hornet, Ricochet, Dusk and Prodigy. The Vulture swoops in on Hornet in *Sensational Spider-Man* #28, and in *Amazing Spider-Man* #435, Ricochet and the muscle-babe/enforcer Delilah battle Roughouse and Bloodscream. Dusk attempts to clear Spidey's name, but the Trapster interrupts that plan in *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #92. Finally, Web-head debates whether or not to scrap his old identity and become Prodigy full-time in *Spectacular Spider-Man* #258. **$1.99 each**

STAR WARS BOOKS (Dark Horse) Renegade Royal Guardsman Kir Kanos is hunted by Imperials in *Star Wars: Crimson Empire* #5, and the New Republic attacks Thrawn's Imperials in *Star Wars: The Last Command* #5. In *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire–Evolution* #3, assassin droid Guri is stalked by bounty hunter Kar Yang, and Sate Pestage gives the Rebels control of the Imperial homeworld in *Star Wars: X-Wing Squadron* #29. **$2.95 each**

SUPERMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) The one, true Superman, with his original powers and costume, returns in *Superman Forever*! In *Adventures of Superman* #558, it seems Supes returns to his Silver Age roots. *Superman: The Man of Steel* #80 sees Supes head back to...1938? And in *Action Comics* #745, look for the Prankster and lots of 1970s decor. ***Superman Forever:* Collector's Edition–$5.95, Standard Edition–$4.95; others–$1.95 each**

TALES OF THE WITCHBLADE #5 (Top Cow/Image) This ancient tale of a witchblade bearer will have some serious repercussions down the road. **$2.95**

VAMPIRELLA: HOLY WAR #3 (Harris) In her quest to end the unholiest war of all, Vampirella must battle the ultimate evil. **$2.95**

WITCHBLADE #22 (Top Cow/Image) Powerless, Sara Pezzini's drawing a lot of attention to herself by searching for clues about her dad's death. **$2.50**

WOLVERINE #125 (Marvel) HYDRA, The Hand, the villainess Viper and six of the women in Wolverine's life are out to kill him. Who's in Wolvie's corner? Just Jubilee and Kitty Pryde. **$2.99**

X-MEN/ALPHA FLIGHT #2 (Marvel) Hated Nazi scum Baron Strucker is out to prove his wacky theories on eugenics by killing the X-Men. It's unfortunate the doofus forgot about Alpha Flight. **$2.99**

poultry and the green cop, our hero's gotta get down to some serious original-recipe mayhem. Expect some finger-lickin'-good violence! By Erik Larsen. **$2.50**

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #14

ABSTRACT STUDIO "High School," Part 2 (of 3). Seventeen-year-old Francine Peters just can't figure out boys. They always get what they want from her (You know what *that* is!), and then toss her aside like yesterday's homework. As Francine's bad reputation blossoms out of control, she turns to her friend Katchoo for help. And that's where the trouble begins. By Terry Moore. **$2.75**

THUNDERBOLTS #15

MARVEL America's least-loved superteam the Thunderbolts is back on Earth. The former villains-turned-heroes are wanted for trying to subjugate the world, and are being hunted by S.H.I.E.L.D. and its superhuman minions—it's enough to make the heroes revert to their criminal roots. And while the 'bolts ponder their future, their former leader Baron Zemo plots his next, extremely evil move. By Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna. **$1.99**

TRANSMETROPOLITAN #10

HELIX/DC COMICS "Freeze Me with Your Kiss," Part 1 (of 3). Life sucks. At least for journalist Spider Jerusalem, it does. Get this: This guy's so screwed that 500 people sign a threatening petition against him, a crazed police dog swears vengeance on him and his dead wife's head is stolen from its cryogenic slumber. Sheesh. By Warren Ellis, Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos. **MR $2.50**

UNCANNY X-MEN #356

MARVEL Years ago, the energy being Phoenix killed billions of people. X-Woman Jean Grey has just adopted the Phoenix's costume and identity. Not surprisingly, the original X-Men are scared pantsless and band together to deal with this potential threat. Sure, Jean is family, but is she on the brink of madness and possibly genocide? By Steven T. Seagle, Chris Bachalo and Tim Townsend. Howard's psychic advice for the X-Men: "Love, accept, support and release. There's a lot of things behind those four words. She has to go do this. This is something she has to go through—so you don't want to impinge on her karma, and prevent her from fulfilling this. She has to go through this kind of dark experience, which will last a little while. But she will come back out of it." **$1.99**

WITCHCRAFT: LA TERREUR #3

on the edge

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

LEMON CUSTARD #2

CALIBER To answer your questions: 1) No, we're not sniffing glue and 2) no, we're not making this up. Bix, the trumpet-playing dog, is gonna be knocking 'em dead at a charity concert for physically challenged children on the one sunny day in San Francisco's history. But wouldn't you know it, the sky suddenly goes black as night on the dark side of the moon. Can a trumpet-playing dog bring the sun back and ensure that lots o' disabled li'l kiddies get some happiness in their lives? Uh...pass the glue, will you? By Mark Badger. **$2.95**

WITCHCRAFT: LA TERREUR #3 (OF 3)

VERTIGO/DC COMICS *Vive la guerre, vive la révolution!* While the masses revolt in 18th-century Paris (no thanks to those Danger Girl chicks, no doubt), young witch Isadore Hibbert storms Le Grande prison with her friends Maude and Miro. The trio hopes to rescue Hibbert's lover, but in the chaos, they might very well become jailbirds. Lousy French... By James Robinson, Michael Zulli and Vince Locke. **MR $2.50**

X-MEN #76

MARVEL He's blue, he's black, he's a musclebound brute, he's almost emaciated. He's crazy, he's sane, he's a good guy, he's a murderer. The newest X-Man Maggott is the biggest mystery of all, but this issue will finally reveal his origin and the truth behind his power to control two giant-sized maggots. Ginchy! By Joe Kelly and Mat Broome. **$1.99**

YOUNG HEROES IN LOVE #13

DC COMICS Who's going to be the Young Heroes' new leader now that Hard Drive's left the team? That's exactly what the Young Heroes are wondering, which sets up a whole lot of infighting, backstabbing and soap-operatic shenanigans. When the final vote is cast, the new leader will be...whoops, outta room. By Dan Raspler, Dev Madan and Keith Champagne. **$1.95**

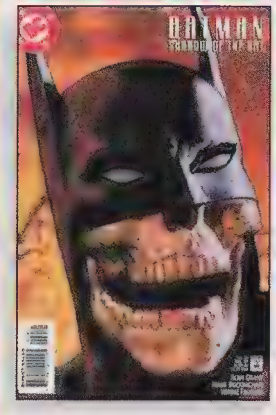
REPORT card

COMIC BOOK REVIEWS

BY *WIZARD* EDITORS BRIAN CUNNINGHAM, ANDREW KARDON AND GREG ORLANDO

BATMAN: SHADOW OF THE BAT

This bat just doesn't fly



ISSUES REVIEWED: #65-#73
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: DC Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Alan Grant, Norm Breyfogle, Mark Buckingham and Wayne Faucher
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.95/Monthly

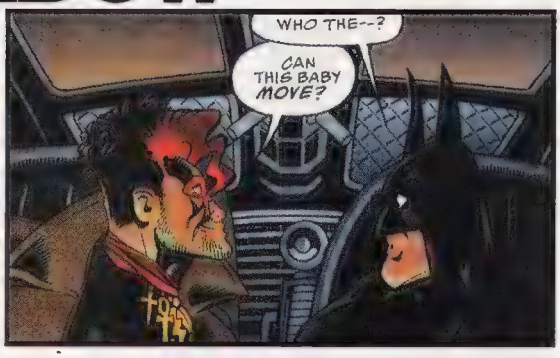
What You Need to Know: The shock of seeing his parents slain before him drove young Bruce Wayne to dedicate his life to fighting crime. Donning the costume of the Batman, he now cleans up Gotham City with his sidekick Robin and helpful ally Oracle.

The Good: *Shadow of the Bat* has some really interesting setups. Issue #65 shocks readers by showing super-cop James Gordon arrested for corruption, a young boy claiming that Bruce Wayne's his abusive father and a newsman blowing out a weatherman's brains on live TV. With teasers like that, it's next to impossible not to get pulled right in.

Overall, the art (Buckingham's quirky art in particular) works quite well in this series. Besides a clean style and good use of backgrounds, the art does a nice job of mixing the lighter moments with the darker ones.

Issue #73 (part one of "Cataclysm") was an awesome setup to the long-awaited Gotham City earthquake tale. Seeing the almost mythical city and Wayne Manor crumble in only a few short panels rates as one of the gutsiest moves we've seen in a long time. Let's hope the rest of the story keeps up the pace. Speaking of which...

The Bad: No matter how great the setup, *Shadow* doesn't deliver in the end. Besides falling flat, the endings wrap up way too conveniently. For example, while investigating a simple murder (issue #71), Batman goes through tons of people before realizing it's not the victim's *wife* who killed him, but the victim's lover's *husband* instead. This abrupt ending came out of nowhere, especially since Batman never investigated a possibly jealous husband in the first place—and then only discovered the man's guilt after simple eavesdropping. Not to mention issue #65's conspiracy storyline. Turns out it was no mastermind pushing Bruce Wayne and Gotham's police into chaos, but a pair of lame-ass villains—one who can "read" people's fears and another who can hypnotize people. Disappointing, to say the least.



Other than the initial setups, *SotB*'s subsequent execution of the stories is too straightforward. With virtually no subplots or twists to thread through the series, these issues are just plain boring.

For the "World's Greatest Detective," Batman does a pretty crappy job of "solving" these crimes. He goes around beating information out of criminals or allows Oracle to practically solve each case with her computer connections.

And finally, the armageddon story (#69-#70) saw Batman extremely out of character, mostly due to the guest appearance of Fate (ugh), who not only breaks into the Batmobile by dropping through an open sunroof but also pals around with Bats like they're old college buds.

The Buzz: With the current "Cataclysm" story breaking new ground in the Bat-books, more readers will certainly be attracted to *Shadow* to get the full story on this mega-crossover.

The Skinny: Despite tremendously intriguing story setups, *Shadow*'s Dark Knight Detective ends up looking clueless. ■

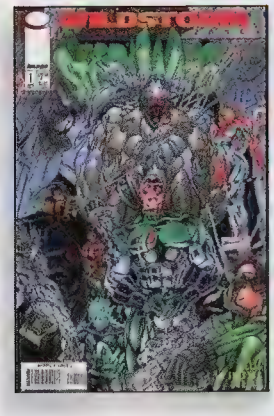
Who knew breaking into the Batmobile was this easy?

Shadow *has great setups (like a young boy accusing Bruce Wayne of being his abusive father), but the endings usually fizzle.*

THE GRADE: C-

STORMWATCH

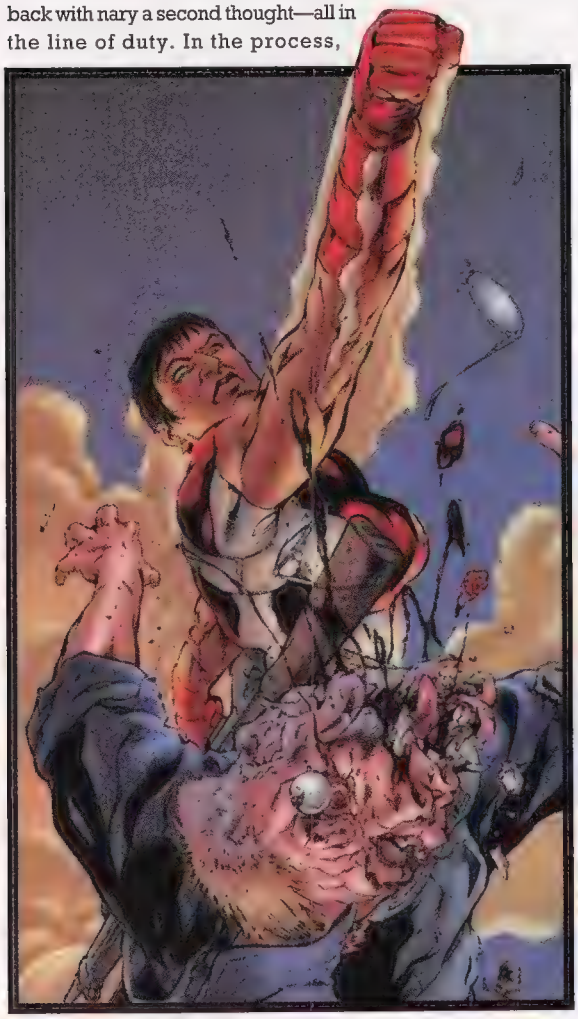
Smooth sailing on Stormy seas



ISSUES REVIEWED: #1-#4
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: WildStorm/Image
CREATIVE TEAM: Warren Ellis, Oscar Jimenez, Bryan Hitch and various inkers
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.50/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Under the auspices of a United Nations charter, the heroes in StormWatch act as a special crisis intervention team. Composed of heroes Winter, Fahrenheit, Hellstrike, Fuji and Flint, StormWatch is the world's last line of defense against villainy in all its forms.

The Good: Bar none, StormWatch is the most realistic government-sponsored team around. Its heroes are brutal and efficient, treating superheroism as a job, plain and simple. In the first issue, the super-strong Flint hits a man so hard, she literally shatters his jaw and knocks an eyeball out. Later, she breaks a man's back with nary a second thought—all in the line of duty. In the process, StormWatch emerges as a team of superpowered Green Berets with personalities that could exist in our overly violent dog-eat-dog world.



StormWatch reads like a political thriller, and abounds with interesting concepts like foes who carry guns inside their stomachs and a terrorist's weapon that works by unraveling the victim's DNA. As the suspense builds, and the team is faced with the prospect of invading a U.S. town without the United States' authorization, StormWatch seeks an alternate solution: Instead of unlawfully invading, the heroes locate a French national in the town and get France to sanction the team's invasion. Neat little twists like these not only keep the reader guessing, but leave them wanting more.

There are some genuine moments of humor which add a great deal to the book. While the team relaxes at a bar (issue #2), the gaseous giant Fuji reveals he has an orgasm every five minutes. As Fuji erupts, so to speak, Fahrenheit quips, "*I* want to be a gaseous posthuman entity."

The Bad: At times, the book's plot races faster than the Flash and becomes confusing. Characters' powers, most notably those of Hawksmoor (of the super-secret subgroup StormWatch Black), are not fleshed out. The book's introductions page states Hawksmoor is "specifically designed to thrive in urban areas," yet it never explains what this means or how the character is able to effectively "walk" between cities. Finally, there's a lot—possibly too much—to absorb in a mere three issues, as StormWatch discovers a terrorist plot to create biological weapons, invades a town to stop these terrorists and ultimately saves the world. Readers might just find themselves saying "Huh?"—but since the concepts are so cool, readers will overlook this.

The Buzz: Bryan Hitch has become the title's regular penciler with issue #4. Beyond that, fans have started catching onto this cool book.

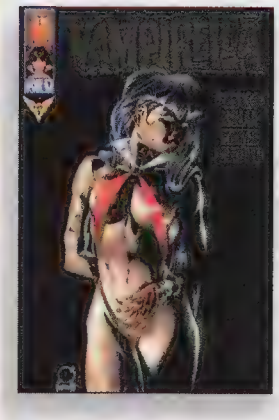
The Skinny: There's a lot to like about *StormWatch*. Its realistic treatment of its heroes and politics make it the best government superhero book out there, but its breakneck pace can overwhelm a reader. ■

The book's wry humor balances the high political drama.

The soldiers of StormWatch *treat heroism as a job—brutally and efficiently.*

THE GRADE: B+

VAMPIRELLA
A bloody good time



ISSUES REVIEWED: #1-#4
GENRE: Supernatural horror/adventure
CREATIVE TEAM: Grant Morrison, Mark Millar, Amanda Conner, Louis Small Jr., Jimmy Palmiotti and Rob Stull
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.95/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Scantily clad vampire Vampirella is back from the dead and on a mission to kill all vampires. Mysteriously unaffected by crosses, holy water, garlic and sunlight, this superbabe heroine now kicks ass and takes no prisoners.

The Good: This book goes for the jugular. For the first time in recent history, Vampirella is a vibrant character who leaps from the pages. She's sassy enough to give the finger to her enemies (issue #3), with the savvy to poke fun at her own plot holes (issue #2). "No one's ever explained how my abilities work. Maybe we'll find out later," she muses.

All at once, the reader will be struck by how much neat stuff the writers jam into every page. The vampires seek to take over the mob and create human "farms" to harvest their blood supply—in the process, they create a sort of Playboy Mansion for the undead. There, vampires drink blood from a straw stuck into heart-filled wine goblets and female bloodsuckers play volleyball with severed human heads. Readers are also treated to a terrified mob boss who laces his rooms with crucifixes, only to be subdued by blind vampires who can't see them. Vampirella even uses an inventive method to destroy her foes by having a priest turn rain into holy water. Stuff like this makes each page a feast for action lovers.

The book's art is fantastic. Despite Vampi's obvious history with T&A, the art calls attention to Vampirella's sexuality with a slightly cartoony look, making it seem less obvious. Every snarl of every fang is rendered so as to competently compete with the book's high-octane plots.

The Bad: Some weird plotting may leave a reader wondering. In the first issue, Vampirella is seen gloating on a gravestone. The next time she appears, she's the prisoner of Don Fattoni, and only the briefest, most flimsy of explanations is given for how she got from one situation to the other. Readers are led to believe Vampirella was captured because she was hanging around Fattoni's hotel—as if the mob has nothing better to do than to detain loiterers. And, hey—we're still scratching our heads over why Dixie, a seemingly loyal vampire, turned on the evil Von Kreist.

Some important plot pieces remain unresolved. While it's a cool mystery that Vampi's invulnerabilities are unexplained, new readers never would've known it *was* a mystery until the second issue.

The Buzz: While Grant Morrison is seeking to be exclusive with DC Comics, he has plotted four three-issue story arcs for *Vampirella*; Millar is expected to stay on as co-plotter/scripter. Also, Crusade heroine Shi will be appearing in a three-issue crossover in #7-#9.

The Skinny: It *is* possible to revive the dead. *Vampirella*'s characters are cool, the concepts are great and, hell, who'da thunk there was more to Vampirella than T&A? ■

Meet the new generation of crimelords: vampires.

With inventive twists, like having a priest turn rain into holy water, Vampirella *proves to be more than T&A.*

Blood Type: THE GRADE: A-

SUPERMAN ADVENTURES

Even better than the real thing

ISSUES REVIEWED: #11–#16
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: DC Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Scott McCloud, Mark Evanier, Mark Millar, Terry Austin and various pencilers
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.95/Monthly

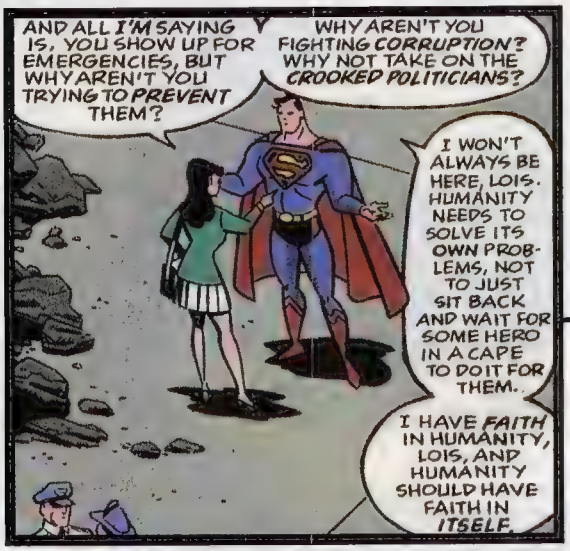
What You Need to Know: Based on Kids' WB!'s "The New Batman/Superman Adventures" cartoon series, this all-ages series tells tales slightly outside of Superman's normal continuity.

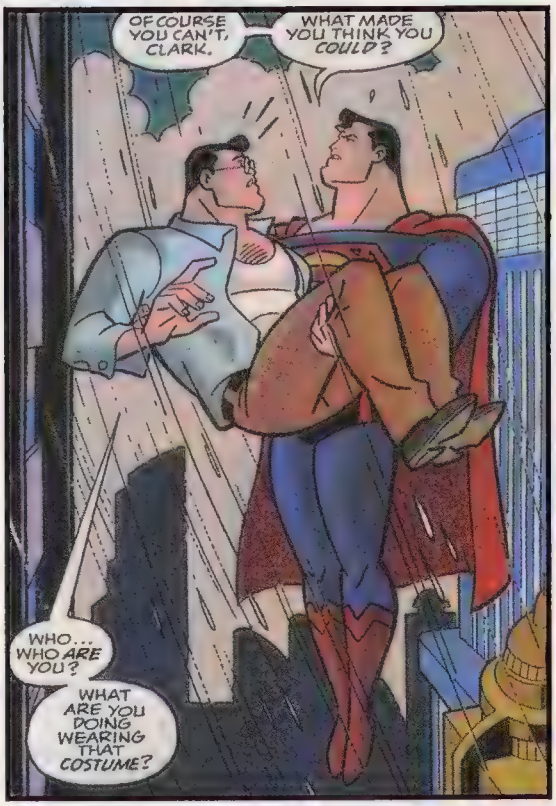
The Good: This is Superman at his best. He's hip, friendly and ready to get down to business—*Superman Adventures* is a great showcase of what the Man of Steel is all about.

The book offers excellent action tales of Superman. The rare two-parter with Superman dying of a Kryptonian virus (#11–#12) works beautifully, whereas it would've been a massive company crossover spanning at least all four Superman titles if it was told in "regular" continuity. Then there's the story where a powerless Clark Kent tries to discover just who the heck that guy flying around as Superman is (#16). These are really neat and tidy stories that you just don't often see in Superman's interlocked "regular" titles these days.

This series also pulls no punches in reminding readers that Superman is a hero for all heroes and his stature in this fictional world is unparalleled. People are awestruck in his presence. His "S" symbol is known worldwide. The United Nations sends troops to guard a site where scientists work to cure Supes' fatal illness. Here, Superman trades his goody-two-shoes image for a decisive, kick-ass attitude.

Even though this series is targeted at younger readers, the concepts in this book are interesting enough that older readers will completely enjoy the series. The title poses interesting questions like: Why doesn't Superman fight corruption *before* things get out of hand, rather than after? Is Batman a braver hero because he doesn't have any powers? If Superman solves the world's problems, does mankind benefit from it in the long run? All these questions and more are tackled in this truly fun series.





The supporting cast helps round out the book. Here, Jimmy Olsen's *not* annoying, Lois Lane's the headstrong reporter she started out to be and Lex Luthor is wonderfully evil as Metropolis' criminal puppet master.

The Bad: The only concern we have with *Superman Adventures* is its target audience. Geared for younger readers, the weightier plots may be too much for the little tykes. And, on the flip side, older readers may be turned off because of the "animated" style. (We hope not.)

But, in fairness to older readers, issue #13's alien sports challenge was just a bit too goofy. If aliens are going to challenge Superman, we'd rather see a massive brawl than a...well, an alien sports game.

The Buzz: With the Superman animated series renewed for a third season and the toy line still going, expect fans to still be seeking out the printed adventures of the animated Man of Steel.

The Skinny: Displaying the Man of Steel's best qualities, *Superman Adventures* clearly gives us the best Superman we've read since writer/artist John Byrne left Big Blue 10 years ago.

Clark ISN'T Superman? Neat twists like this showcase the Man of Steel's best qualities.

Adventures raises interesting questions about Superman that older readers will enjoy (though younger ones might not).

THE GRADE: A

FROM THE CREATOR OF "GHOST IN THE SHELL" MASAMUNE SHIROW

LANDLOCK

PART 1

Manga Video proudly presents the long awaited original video animation, Landlock, the new two part techno mystical anime adventure featuring character designs by the world renowned Masamune Shirow, creator of Ghost In The Shell.

The land of Zer'lue is in turmoil, ravaged by the technological might of Chairman Sana'ku and his evil, militaristic Zul'earth forces. In a rapidly unfolding story of treachery, deceit and betrayal, only one boy holds the power to defeat such overwhelming odds... a boy named Lue'der, who possesses a mysterious red eye and the ability to control the power of the wind itself.

With the fate of the world at stake, Lue'der must learn to unlock his legendary power and battle against the evil which threatens to engulf his planet. But Sana'ku's forces are closing in, led by Zul'earth's unstoppable elite assassin, Sana'ku's own daughter Aga'lee, who only hours ago, mercilessly dealt Lue'der's father a hideous death on the end of her sword.

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FIRST MANGA ON THE MOON

Deadbeats ride the 'Spirit of Wonder' in Tsuruta's lunar epic

Some guys promise women the moon. Jim Floyd intends to deliver. Several years ago, somewhere in a little seaside town in England, there was a ramshackle laboratory on the top floor of Ten-Kai, the local Chinese restaurant. The restaurant's beautiful owner, known simply as "Miss China," lived downstairs. Upstairs, her deadbeat boarders, old Professor Breckenridge and young assistant Jim Floyd, ducked their rent every chance they got. Within their room has been a spaghetti of wires and tubes—a crackpot device that will enable instant travel to the moon. When Jim offers Miss China a trip, is it the ultimate romantic date, or just a way to avoid getting tossed out for not paying the rent? The answer is somewhere within Kenji Tsuruta's delightful *Spirit of Wonder*.

The weird science of *Spirit of Wonder* doesn't exist in any modern physics textbook. "I've always been attracted to things that are totally off-the-wall," Tsuruta says in an interview which appears in issue #2. "I guess you could say that, since I really don't know that much about science, I was able to make that kind of leap."

Such lack of knowledge puts him in the same boat with a lot of comics writers, but instead of coming up with futuristic-sounding double-talk, Tsuruta takes the more ingenious approach of "retro-science." His stories dust off ideas that haven't been believed for 100 years—fanciful notions like the Earth is hollow, or that outer space is filled with an "ether" you can sail on like a ship.

The story of *Spirit* revolves around Breckenridge and Jim's desperate attempts to gain fame and fortune from their astounding inventions, which, in a sort of cosmic joke, seem to be greeted with crashing indifference by the public, no matter how literally Earth-shaking they are. Their lack of success may have something to do with the lecherous Professor using his teleportation gadget for things like trying to remotely grope Miss China.

BY CARL GUSTAV HORN

BANG, ZOOM! Lovely Miss China is offered a trip to the moon by two of her tenants.

Fans who think they know what the "manga style" is will be surprised to find that Tsuruta draws characters in a more realistic manner than many Japanese artists. His people actually have noses, and hair that looks like it's made out of individual strands, not pre-formed plastic molds, as is the norm for most manga characters. All of this doesn't mean that Tsuruta doesn't know "cute"—with her thigh-cut blue cheong-sam dress and her hair done up in two little side buns, Miss China seems to ooze cuteness—it's just that these characters manage to escape most manga conventions quite nicely, thank you.

Tsuruta's characters exist in a meticulously penciled and inked world. As a black-and-white artist, he does an excellent job rendering the textures of the world, like

ANIMEPICK

ANIME FILM OF THE MONTH

Golden Boy

(A.D.V. Films, 30 mins. each, $19.98/$24.95 subtitled/dubbed)

Cartoonist Matt Groening (creator of "The Simpsons") once said the bitterest person in the world is a grad-school dropout. Not Kintaro Oe, the brilliant "Golden Boy," who left law school on his mountain bike to become a drifter, doing odd jobs in "the school of life." But his bike isn't the only thing with defective brakes—whether working as a janitor, campaign volunteer, sushi chef, swimming instructor, monk or animator's assistant (!), Kintaro (above) seems to keep running into beautiful women that dissolve his thin mask of normalcy and turn each temp assignment into a personal obsession. But whether being beaten by Yakuza, battered by bikers or bashed by the boss, Kintaro regards everything as educational (writing down in his notebook such observations as "The human head cannot turn 360 degrees."), and at the end of the day, you know he's going to pick up that paycheck! "Golden Boy" is a bizarre, dynamic and sexy comedy, based on the manga of the same name by Tatsuya Egawa (who counts as fans American creators such as Adam Warren [*Gen13 Bootleg*] and Paul Pope [*The One Trick Ripoff*]), and directed with energy by "Roujin Z"'s Hiroyuki Kitakubo. There are currently six volumes of "Golden Boy" available. ■

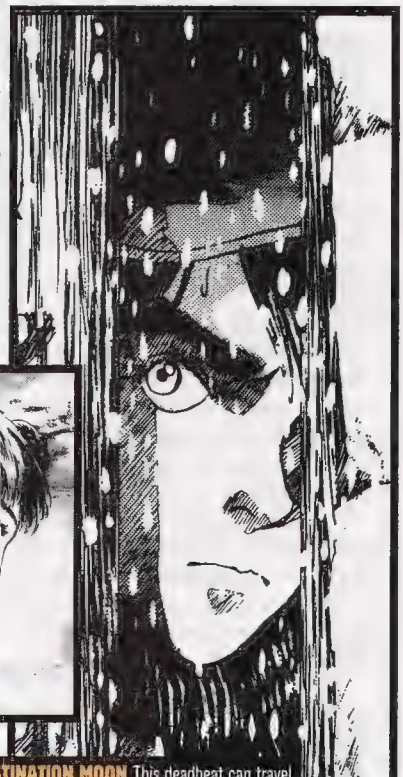
PUPPET BOY Want to make drifter Kintaro Oe dance? Just be female and flash some skin!

wood, stone and clothing. To Tsuruta, this is a storytelling approach. "I try not to let the words take charge. Japanese manga readers rely too much on the words. I want people to look at the art. I've tried to make a comic where you have to read the art in order to understand the story. The pictures are a code for deciphering the story."

Such detail comes at a price. The more patient days of the past suit not only Tsuruta's art style, but his work style: He is, as Studio Proteus president and *Spirit* co-translator Toren Smith puts it, "astoundingly slow." Indeed, Tsuruta's current ongoing series in Japan, "Forget-Me-Not," has only had two installments published since last fall, which would look bad enough even if it wasn't featured in a weekly magazine! But Smith reveals that his fans cut him some slack, not only due to the quality of his work when it arrives, but because he suffers from a chronic illness. Still, Tsuruta manages to do all his work, without assistants—something of a rarity for a manga artist of his stature.

No further material from Tsuruta is on Dark Horse's immediate horizon, but *Previews* recently featured a special collection of three Tsuruta books just published in Japan: *Hydrogen*, a beautiful, 256-page hardback reproducing all his color works as well as a manga story with footnotes in English explaining the plot; *SF Greats: Collected Early Works*, a collection of Tsuruta's fanzine work (edited by avid fan Hideaki Anno, director of "Neon Genesis Evangelion"); and the Japanese edition of *Spirit of Wonder*, which contains 256 pages of *Spirit* stories not published here. (W)

Carl "El Ganso" Horn se cayo dentro de un oro de fuego. El fue bajando, bajando, bajando y las flamas iban altas.



DESTINATION MOON This deadbeat can travel to the moon in seconds. Want a ride, Miss China?

FYI

ADDITIONAL INFO

The *Spirit of Wonder* graphic novel goes on sale from Dark Horse on June 24, collecting the entire five-issue 1996 run in 152 pages for $12.95, in Dark Horse's new, "pocket-sized" trade paperback format. However, the individual issues of *Spirit* are still around at their cover price of $2.95 each, which not only gives readers the art at a somewhat larger size, but will enable them to get all of Tsuruta's beautiful covers. *Spirit of Wonder* was also made into a 45-minute anime video in 1992. It's available through AnimEigo for $19.95/$24.95/$39.95 (dubbed/subtitled/laserdisc, respectively).

MANGAPICKS

MUST-READ JAPANESE COMICS SHIPPING IN APRIL

ASHEN VICTOR #1 (of 4)

VIZ COMICS

Return to the world of Battle Angel Alita and the arena of the future's deadliest high-speed bloodsport, "Motorball," in this brand-new story from Yukito Kishiro.

Snev is the cyborg Motorballer known as the "Crash King"—as in the kind of crash his opponents don't walk away from. But Snev's grasp on sanity is just as tenuous as that of his crazed fans. Is he leading his teammates to victory, or death?

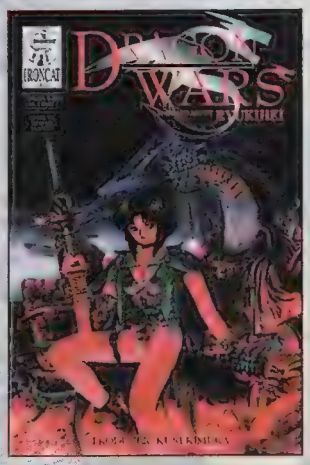
CHIRALITY #14

CPM COMICS

They thought they were the only survivors! Carol, Shiori, Vic, Patty and Shizuma have reached the end of their trek—the base of GAIA—only to find another party of refugees already encamped there. Either both groups will work together to restore a future for human life, or both will fall to a trap that may prove humanity obsolete. From Satoshi Urushihara (*Legend of Lemnear*). *Chirality* is for mature readers only.

DRAGON WARS #1

STUDIO IRONCAT



From Ryukihei, creator of Antarctic Press' *Stainless Steel Armadillo*, comes a new foray into sword-and-sorcery adventure. Twin treasure hunters—the lovely, talented Seren, and her dragon companion Saht—steal more than they can easily pocket when they rip off something special from the Royal House: a piece of ancient technology. Will Seren and Saht be able to fence this bit of gear for big bucks, or will they just destroy the world with it?

GUNSMITH CATS: GOLDIE VS. MISTY #6 (of 7)

DARK HORSE COMICS

Goldie is six feet worth of female mobster, and she wants to sing "Close to You" to bounty hunter Rally Vincent! Rally's going to need more than a fast draw when Goldie's flooding the streets with syringes of Kerasine, a designer drug that gives you the calm of PCP, and the stability of LSD! This is one shot Rally would rather miss—big time. And this book is for mature readers.

MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH GRAPHIC NOVEL

MIXX PUBLICATIONS

The premiere "Pocket Manga" collection from the bold new American manga magazine, *MIXXZINE*, collects the first five installments of *Rayearth*, a lush, stylish fantasy adventure from Japan's female comic supergroup, CLAMP. Three 14-year-old Japanese girls have to become a fighting team when they're chosen to save the world of Cephiro from an evil usurper. If they can't save Cephiro's throne, they can never go home!

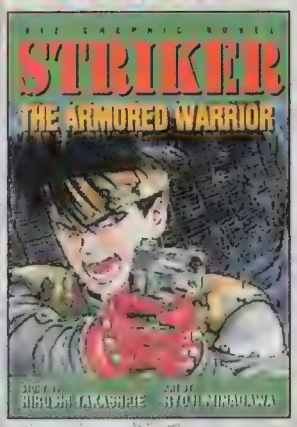
ROBOTECH ANNUAL #1

ANTARCTIC PRESS

This *Robotech Annual* features stories from all three parts of the classic series. Revisit "Macross," as a sleeper agent roams the corridors of the SDF-1 with murder in mind. Then, military spook Nova and techno-tanker Louie must work together to close the book on a string of criminal attacks against the bases of the "Southern Cross." The third offering is an untold "New Generation" story, set between episodes #62 and #63.

STRIKER: THE ARMORED WARRIOR GRAPHIC NOVEL

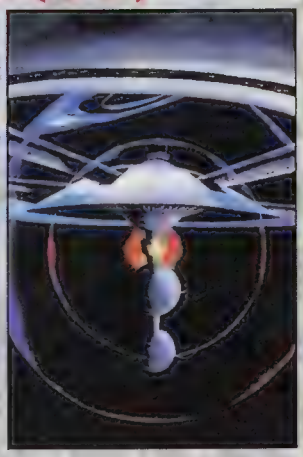
VIZ COMICS



"Raiders of the Lost Ark" should have warned us about disturbing Biblical relics—this time, the ark is Noah's, and its secrets are just as deadly! As groups from the world over converge on Turkey's Mt. Ararat to claim the ancient ship, only the wisdom of the Arcam Foundation and its elite special forces, the Strikers, can save humanity from the repeat of a Biblical catastrophe!

THE TWO FACES OF TOMORROW #9 (of 13)

DARK HORSE COMICS



The orbital experiment to see how an artificial intelligence would defend itself against human attack has flipped sides—supercomputer Spartacus has evolved from the prey of Dr. Dyer's team to their predator! Regaining control over Spartacus is no longer a leisurely game. Now, it's a desperation move, and checkmate means death for everyone onboard. *Faces* is based on the novel of the same name by James A. Hogan. ■

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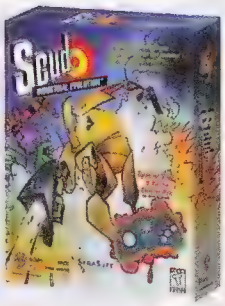
CONTEST

"MY NAME IS SCUD" CONTEST

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One straight-shooter wins a copy of Scud: The Disposable Assassin's PC game alled *Scud: Industrial Evolution*™, the original cover art from the special limited-edition *Scud: The Disposable Assassin*™ #18 signed by creator Rob Schrab and, so he can catch up on the comic series, the first three *Scud* trade paperbacks, covering issues #1-#15 and personally autographed to the winner by Rob!



FIRST PRIZE (25): Twenty-five sharp-shooters each take out a copy of *Scud: Industrial Evolution*™ and a copy of *Scud*™ #17 signed by creator Rob Schrab with cover art by fantasy artist Jeff Easley.

GOT YOUR SIGHTS SET ON THESE FAB PRIZES? Well, simply pull out your trusty pen, fill out the entry form below completely and mail it on in. We'll wade through the entries and randomly pick the lucky winners. Never thought winning could be so easy, did you?

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TRASH TALK

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Fireman Press Ltd., SegaSoft, their immediate families and anyone reading this and wondering to themselves, "Who the hell is this Scud character they keep talking about?" Get with it fella! Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "My Name is Scud" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Unless you have a silly name like River or Moon Unit. In that case, we'll send it to someone whose parents weren't hippies. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by May 29, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, incomplete, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be by random drawing from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than June 29, 1998. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about June 12, 1998.

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For a list of winners, available after June 12, 1998, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "My Name is Scud" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, put it in an envelope and shoot it to:

"My Name is Scud" Contest
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118.

"My Name is Scud" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE MAY 29, 1998!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-Mail _____

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH By Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

X-MEN COMEBACK!

Core X-books enjoy renaissance, second tier in a rut

You'd almost think Joe Kelly and Steven T. Seagle had mutant superpowers.

Since jumping on board a couple of months ago, these writers of *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men*, respectively, have not used optic blasts or telekinesis to tear up the market, but rather, their natural talents to tell simple, streamlined stories.

Some readers had defected from the X-books amid a twisted knot of plots, so Seagle and Kelly refocused their books with simpler, jumping-on-point stories. At the same time, new X-Men Marrow, Maggott and Cecilia Reyes became a focus, giving fans something new. The combination has worked, with both new and back issues moving well.

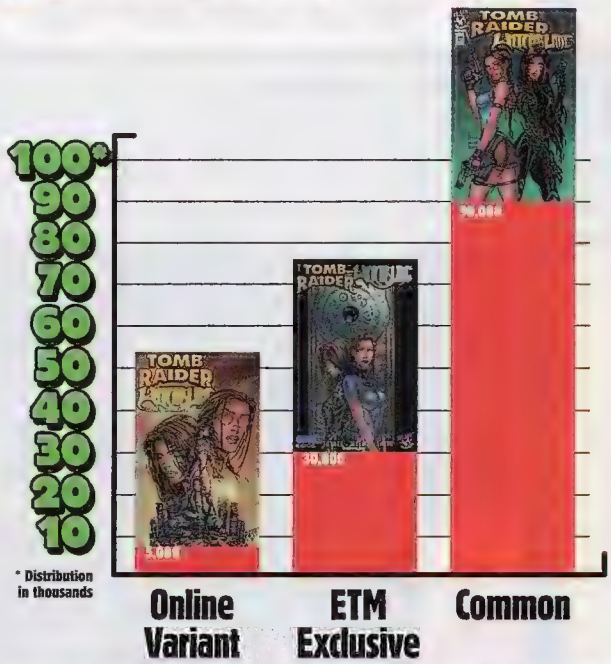
But be warned that as fans cheer the core X-books, appreciation for lower-tier X-titles *Excalibur*, *X-Force* and *X-Factor* is dying out. Readers are falling away, and prices are stagnant. The cancellation of *Excalibur* with August's #125 surely won't help that title's back-issue fortunes, but a planned revamp on August's *X-Factor* #150 may kick-start interest in that title.

So watch for key Kelly and Seagle books, and don't ignore February's *Uncanny X-Men* #354A, with a variant cover featuring Jean Grey as the Phoenix. Remember the Rogue cover from *Uncanny* #342A that's worth big bucks? Jean's offering might follow suit.

WITCHBLADE RAIDS BIG SALES

Tomb Raider/Witchblade, a marriage of comic books and video games starring video vixen Lara Croft and Witchblade-wearer Sara Pezzini, has been a cash cow for Top Cow despite (or perhaps *because of*) its non-traditional distribution.

HEY! That's funky distribution. Just how many *Tomb Raider/Witchblades* are there, anyway?



And that ain't all. At press time, the limited-time offer wasn't quite over. Foxhoven estimates that total orders, currently at 125,000, will hit 140,000.

The comic was offered through an order form found in the packaging of millions of copies of the *Tomb Raider II* video game, and was also available online or through filling out a survey.

Top Cow President Brad Foxhoven emphasizes the book's sell-through, saying, "A retailer might order 10 copies of a typical *Witchblade* issue, sell nine and have one left sitting. But this is as close to 100 percent, in-consumer-hands sell-through as you're going to find."

A number of variants are available:

• **"COMMON" COVER**—Featuring a blue background with characters standing back to back. Available through mail-order, online or as a freebie for completing a Top Cow survey.

• **ONLINE VARIANT**—Exclusive to the Website **www.topcowstore.com**, this has a brown cover with the characters sitting on a ledge. A measly 5,000 copies were printed and offered first-come, first-served. It's sold out.

• **ETM EXCLUSIVE**—Available only by mail through Entertainment This Month's catalog, this variant sports

black borders and a new back-to-back pose.

By the way, if you're cursing the fact that you missed *TR/Witchblade*, Foxhoven says, "Eidos is definitely doing a Witchblade video game. [Eidos hasn't confirmed this.] So maybe we'll do something like this again."

SUPES & SPIDEY SLUMP

Pity Superman and Spider-Man. They can't defeat the dreaded enemies of boredom and high supply.

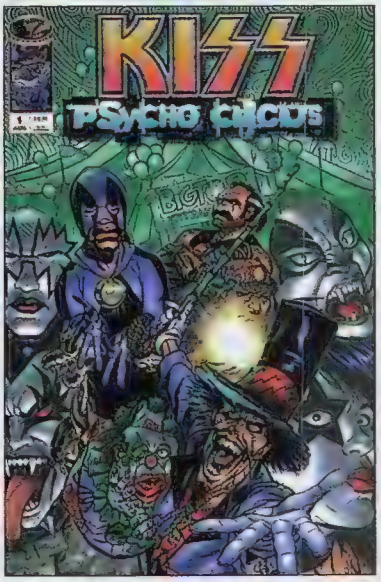
Back-issue activity for these heroes has just about died, reflecting new comics many readers sum up in one word: "Blah." Some readers say they're confused or occasionally offended by Superman's change into a giant Smurf with energy powers, a change they say lacked a compelling story. Spidey readers complain they're still lost in a quagmire of plots, such as the return of villain Norman Osborn, that leave them without direction.

But these complaints pale before the sheer weight that is Supes and Spidey comics. Most readers regularly buy a few ancillary titles such as *Spider-Man: The Manga*, so getting two books for each hero a week isn't unusual—leaving little wallet lettuce to buy old stuff.

Marvel has said that Spidey's titles will be pared down and refocused this fall. But this is Supes' 60th anniversary, so expect a deluge of books.

KISS ME, YOU FAN!

On the one side, there's the "KISS



LIP SERVICE KISS toasts the back-issue market.

PHOTOS: BUSIEK, DAVID, ADAM HUBERT; LEE, MADUREIRA, RIOS; WAID BY PAUL SCHRALD; MORRISON BY BOBO MARTIN; LOBDELL BY J. SCHUTLER; ELLIS BY SCOTT WYBAKER; SILVESTRI BY JIM McHUGH; ANDY KUBERT BY C. BLANKENHORN

TOP 10 CREATORS

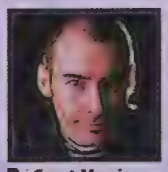
FAN FAVORITES

These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top 10 Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Kurt Busiek
Astro City, Avengers

2. Joe Kelly
X-Men, Deadpool



3. Grant Morrison
JLA, The Invisibles

4. Mark Waid
Captain America, JLA: Year One

5. Peter David
Hulk, Supergirl

6. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Hitman

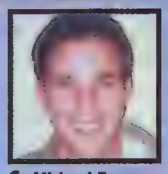
7. Steven T. Seagle
Uncanny X-Men, Alpha Flight

8. Scott Lobdell
Daredevil

9. Christina Z.
Witchblade

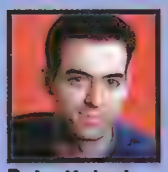
10. Warren Ellis
StormWatch, Transmetropolitan

ARTISTS

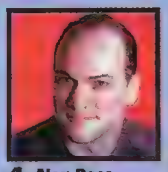


1. Michael Turner
Witchblade

2. Jim Lee
Divine Right



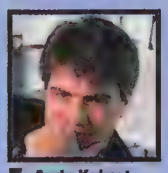
3. Joe Madureira
upcoming: Battle Chasers



4. Alex Ross
Superman: Peace On Earth

5. Marc Silvestri
The Darkness

6. Adam Kubert
Incredible Hulk



7. Andy Kubert
Ka-Zar

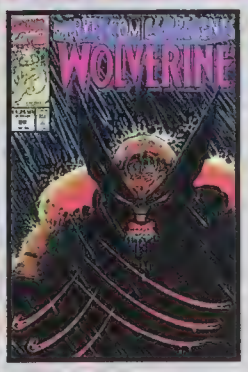
8. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl

9. Leinil Francis Yu
Wolverine

10. Chris Bachalo
Uncanny X-Men

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS



MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #89

Joe Madureira. He revolutionized X-Men art in the '90s, spawning waves of both copycat artists and devoted fans. Now, he's poised to help found Image's new Cliffhanger imprint and launch a title called *Battle Chasers*–and his first work still sells for 'bout as much as a can of shaving cream.

Marvel Comics Presents #89, where the Mad Man pencils a Mojo story, represents Joe's first full story (he did #87's back cover). Like most *MCP* books, it goes for, oh, about a buck or two. You may want to get #89 while it's still a bargain. Or when *Battle Chasers* comes out in April, you might be the one doing the chasing. ■ LP

Army," obsessed fans who go ape over the legendary rock band KISS. On the other, there are readers who drink deep of *KISS: The Psycho Circus*' garish feel and Vertigo-ish story. Together, they've got this title toasting most superheroes in the after-market.

With *KISS: TPC*, creators Brian Holguin (*Cyberforce*) and Angel Medina (*Incredible Hulk*) have set up the four KISS members as high spirits, universal forces that punish evildoers and give aid to their victims. Set in a traveling circus, the comic is laden with KISS song and album references, truly any KISS fan's dream.

Don't ignore this book's staying power. There have been rumblings that future albums and tours may tie in to the comic. Also, a line of comic-based toys is scheduled to hit stores in June. All of this exposure means that years from now, readers might see this as the start of the second KISS comic book revolution. That means potential big back-market bucks for *The Psycho Circus*.

EVIL IS GOOD Despite high orders, *Gog*'s still cookin'.

NEW YEAR RINGS IN TWO HITS

One-shots. Unless they're crucial to a storyline, they usually dive like depressed lemmings.

But DC's "New Year's Evil" books, the group of one-shots that featured various fiends, appear to have two winners. *Gog* and *Prometheus* are already commanding $5 each, while other "NYE" titles collect dust.

The reasons are story-driven. *Gog* has ties to Magog, a major player in the critically acclaimed *Kingdom Come* mini-series. And Prometheus' one-shot introduces that character, who's recently gone on to trounce most of the JLA, gaining tons of respect from fans.

What's odd is that *Gog* and *Prometheus* were the highest-ordered New Year's Evil books, and they *still* sold out! So watch them as the year—and these characters' evil—progresses.

Wizard *Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson needs women! Right now!*

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Suite 192
Chesapeake, VA 23321
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Joel Thingvall
Nostalgia Zone
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Minneapolis, MN 55406
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Comics Conspiracy
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Stuart Wagner
Caveman
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Robert Scott
Comickaze Comics
& Sportscards
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San Diego, CA 92111
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(213) 658-6047

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Cranberry Township, PA
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Phil Davis
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Roanoke, VA 24016
(703) 342-6642

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Comics & Comix
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TOP 10 comics

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

1 THE DARKNESS #11 (CHROMIUM COVER)

WRITERS: G. Ennis and M. Coney
ARTISTS: J.Benitez, M. Silvestri, C. Lansang and Livesay

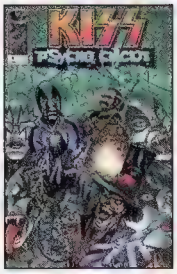
If you build it, they will come. If you make it 1-per-100-copies-ordered scarce, they'll *really* come. *The Darkness* is big and the ballyhooed Return of Ennis is big, but the quantities on this much-lusted-after shiny object are not big. There's fewer of these in circulation than there are slobberin' fanboys reading this write-up who had a date last weekend. Now that's rare. And that's why this book is No. 1. **LAST MONTH: 5**

2 JLA #2

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

Barbie was right! Math class is hard! Once again (seems like it happens every couple o' months) *JLA* #2 actually outpolls *JLA* #1. So siddown and take notes this time so we never have to explain it again: There are fewer copies of #2 in circulation than #1. Simple as that. That's why #2 sells for more than #1, too. Ask this question again, and we'll have Electro-Superman come to your house and screw up the clock on your VCR so it's blinkin' "12:00" forever. **LAST MONTH: 3**

3 KISS: THE PSYCHO CIRCUS #1



WRITER: Brian Holguin
ARTISTS: Angel Medina and Kevin Conrad

Like the word "psycho" is necessary in this title? KISS is a conglomerate of middle-aged men who dress up in Halloween costumes, play loud-ass heavy metal music, *willingly* travel to Detroit and half of them have banged Cher. That's psycho behavior. No need to advertise it. **LAST MONTH: 4**

4 WITCHBLADE #1

WRITERS: David Wohl, Brian Haberlin and Christina Z.
ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

Witchblade solved the Microwave Murderer case. What a name–"Microwave Murderer!" Rolls off the tongue! Names that cool are only found in pro wrestling, porn or comics. Put all three together, and you get one wicked combo. Gives "rolling off the tongue" a new meaning. **LAST MONTH: 2**

5 JLA #1

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

So maybe *JLA* #2 is ahead of #1. That doesn't mean that collectors aren't still chasing copies like Bill Clinton chases chunky interns. And why would Clinton bother with this Monica Lewinsky chick? He's the president! He can get Wonder Woman-quality chicks. And probably a copy of *JLA* #1 while he's at it. **LAST MONTH: 1**

6 FANTASTIC FOUR (VOL. 3) #1

WRITER: Scott Lobdell
ARTISTS: Alan Davis and Mark Farmer

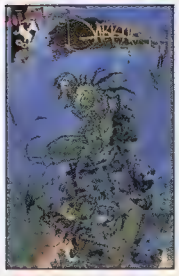
Credit where credit is due: It lasted a mere three issues, but Messrs. Lobdell, Davis and Farmer did an ass-whippin' great job on their run on *Fantastic Four*. Want proof? *FF* #1 was the highest-ordered of the "Heroes Return" books and it's *still* got the most demand behind it. **LAST MONTH: NOT RATED (N.R.)**

7 UNCANNY X-MEN #350

WRITER: Steven T. Seagle
ARTISTS: J. Madureira, A. Smith, T. Townsend, V. Russell and D. Panosian

Weird mojo here: *Uncanny* #350 is beloved for the return of Magneto! Fans love that Maggy is back, nasty as he wants ta be! But *Uncanny* #350 is unloved for Gambit goin' bye-bye from the X-Men! Fans want the Cajun back, like now! Regardless, this puppy is in high demand. **LAST MONTH: 6**

8 THE DARKNESS #1



WRITERS: Garth Ennis
ARTISTS: Marc Silvestri and Batt

The Darkness #1 gets a teeny-weeny bump from... *Darkness* #11? Yep. Seems the feeding frenzy over the 11 covers on #11 have made people take a second look at #1, even though the two have nothing to do with each other. This leads to one conclusion: You're all sheep. Report for your shearing. **LAST MONTH: 9**

9 DIVINE RIGHT #1

WRITER: Jim Lee
ARTISTS: Jim Lee and Scott Williams

What took ya so damn long? *Divine Right: The Adventures of Max Faraday #1*, much like the stealth bomber, remained under people's radar for several months before finally clicking. But sooner or later, the siren call that is "Jim Lee" hooked everyone in. This leads to one conclusion: You're all sheep. Report for lamb-chopping. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

10 THUNDERBOLTS #1

WRITER: Kurt Busiek
ARTISTS: Mark Bagley and Vince Russell

What's that T-Bolts tagline? "Justice, like lightning?" Justice, our collective ass! In case you've been living under a rock, let us spell it out clear as day: The Thunderbolts are the Masters of Evil in disguise! But ya know what? It's a cool concept, it worked and it's a rockin'-good comic. **LAST MONTH: 15**

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **FEBRUARY**

TOP100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.

No, you didn't miss an issue—this is a rare variant cover to *Uncanny X-Men #354*!

1. Uncanny X-Men #354 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #74 (Marvel)
3. Spawn #71 (McFarlane/Image)
4. The Avengers #3 (Marvel)
5. Fantastic Four #4 (Marvel)
6. Wolverine #123 (Marvel)
7. JLA #17 (DC)
8. Iron Man #3 (Marvel)
9. Captain America #4 (Marvel)
10. Witchblade #21 (Top Cow/Image)
11. The Darkness #13 (Top Cow/Image)
12. Curse of the Spawn #18 (McFarlane/Image)
13. Generation X #37 (Marvel)
14. JLA: Year One #4 (DC)
15. X-Force #76 (Marvel)
16. X-Factor #144 (Marvel)
17. X-Man #37 (Marvel)
18. Cable #53 (Marvel)
19. Incredible Hulk #463 (Marvel)
20. Amazing Spider-Man #433 (Marvel)
21. Gen^{13} #26 (WildStorm/Image)
22. Youngblood #1 (Awesome)
23. Ascension #5 (Top Cow/Image)
24. Divine Right: T.A.O.M.F. #5 (WildStorm/Image)
25. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #90 (Marvel)
26. Gen^{12} #1 (WildStorm/Image)
27. KISS: The Psycho Circus #7 (McFarlane/Image)
28. Spectacular Spider-Man #256 (Marvel)
29. Alpha Flight #9 (Marvel)
30. Excalibur #119 (Marvel)
31. Superman #134 (DC)
32. Batman #553 (DC)
33. Sensational Spider-Man #26 (Marvel)
34. Superman: The Man of Steel #78 (DC)
35. Action Comics #743 (DC)
36. Adventures of Superman #556 (DC)
37. Detective Comics #720 (DC)
38. Nightwing #19 (DC)
39. Thunderbolts #13 (Marvel)
40. Astro City #13 (Homage/Image)
41. Deadpool #15 (Marvel)
42. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #73 (DC)
43. Preacher #36 (Vertigo/DC)
44. Catwoman #56 (DC)
45. Green Lantern #97 (DC)
46. The Flash #136 (DC)
47. Robin #52 (DC)
48. Supergirl #20 (DC)
49. Batman: Blackgate—Isle of Men #1 (DC)
50. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #105 (DC)
51. The Tenth #6 (Image)
52. Batman: Bane of the Demon #2 (DC)
53. Wonder Woman #132 (DC)
54. Lady Death #2 (Chaos!)
55. Star Wars: Crimson Empire #3 (Dark Horse)
56. Azrael #40 (DC)
57. S.W.: Shadows of the Empire—Evolution #1 (D.H.)
58. Legends of the DC Universe #3 (DC)
59. Green Lantern & Sentinel: Heart of Darkness #2 (DC)
60. Xena: Warrior Princess—Callisto #1 (Topps)
61. Star Wars: The Last Command #3 (Dark Horse)
62. Gen^{13} Bootleg #16 (WildStorm/Image)
63. Thrillkillers '62 (DC)
64. Teen Titans #19 (DC)
65. Ka-Zar #12 (Marvel)
66. Aquaman #43 (DC)
67. Gen^{13} Bootleg Annual #1 (WildStorm/Image)
68. Xena: Xena & The Dragon's Teeth #3 (Topps)
69. Heroes for Hire #10 (Marvel)
70. Starman #41 (DC)
71. Crypt of Dawn #3 (Sirius)
72. Silver Surfer #138 (Marvel)
73. WildC.A.T.s #46 (WildStorm/Image)
74. Maverick #8 (Marvel)
75. Mage: The Hero Defined #8 (Image)
76. Coven #6 (Awesome)
77. Elektra #17 (Marvel)
78. Superboy #50 (DC)
79. Babylon 5: In Valen's Name #2 (DC)
80. S.W. X-Wing Rogue Squadron—F.T. #2 (D.H.)
81. DV8 #16 (WildStorm/Image)
82. Daredevil #374 (Marvel)
83. Witchcraft: La Terreur #1 (Vertigo/DC)
84. Starman Secret Files #1 (DC)
85. What If? #107 (Marvel)
86. Blade #1 (Marvel)
87. Hitman #25 (DC)
88. WildC.A.T.s Annual #1 (WildStorm/Image)
89. The X-Files: Ground Zero #4 (Topps)
90. Quicksilver #6 (Marvel)
91. Ka-Zar/Daredevil '98 (Marvel)
92. Legion of Super-Heroes #103 (DC)
93. Vampirella: Holy War #1 (Harris)
94. Shi: The Series #7 (Crusade)
95. StormWatch #4 (WildStorm/Image)
96. Legionnaires #59 (DC)
97. Savage Dragon #46 (Image)
98. Shi: Masquerade #1 (Crusade)
99. The Dreaming #23 (Vertigo/DC)
100. Batman Adventures: The Lost Years #4 (DC)

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE BIG READERSHIP

Avengers #3 (No. 4)

How many Avengers can dance on the head of a pin? That's what creators Kurt Busiek (*Astro City*) and George Pérez (uh...the previous *Avengers* title) are trying to figure out in a storyline featuring *every living Avenger*. Whew! Notice how popularity erosion on this book isn't as heavy as on the other "Heroes Return" titles, meaning that it's a contest between *Avengers* and *Fantastic Four* to be king of the "Reborn" hill.

Youngblood #1 (No. 22)

Proving that a title can be a roaring success even if it hasn't published in two years, *Youngblood* bloodied the opposition this month, backed with a story from fan-favorite Alan Moore (*Supreme*), art from Steve Skroce (*X-Man*) and a whopping eight covers. The No. 22 rank is even more impressive considering only a few recognizable characters are left over from the original Youngblood series.

Batman: "Cataclysm" books (Nos. 32, 37, 38, 42, 44, 47, 49, 56)

It was the first Batman crossover in a year and a half...and it worked! "Cataclysm," the earthquake-based Batman crossover that destroyed Wayne Manor, the Batcave and most of Gotham City, gave the Bat-titles a minimum five-percent increase, and rocketed up lower-tier titles like *Azrael* and *Catwoman*. Guess something good can come of complete disaster.

Superman: "Millennium Giants" books (Nos. 31, 34, 48, 64, 66)

Paired against "Cataclysm" is the Superman "Millennium Giants" crossover, a story in which big doofus-looking giants seek to eradicate all life on Earth...or something. The Giants didn't boost basic Superman sales one lick, but inflated lower-tier crossover titles such as *Aquaman*, *Supergirl* and *Teen Titans* big-time.

Starman Secret Files (No. 84)

Starman sales have been on the rise since #29 shipped in February 1997, and this $4.95-priced *Starman Secret Files* sold remarkably close to its parent title. Not bad for a big-ticket book.

StormWatch #4 (No. 95)

Comic sales usually stabilize by the fourth issue, so an increase here shows that fans seem to be grooving to the new *StormWatch* title from writer Warren Ellis (*Transmetropolitan*) and artist Bryan Hitch (*X-Men*). The previous *StormWatch* title was winning acclaim just as it ended, and that boost helps this new offering. Keep *Watching*. Ouch. That was bad.

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at February's top-selling books in a variety of categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.

TOP 10 MANGA BOOKS

1. X-Men: The Manga #2 (Marvel, No. 117)
2. X-Men: The Manga #3 (Marvel, No. 124)
3. Oh My Goddess!: Ninja Master #2 (D.H., No. 156)
4. Gunsmith Cats: Goldie vs. Misty #4 (D.H., No. 158)
5. Ranma 1/2 Part Seven #1 (Viz, No. 162)
6. Spider-Man: The Manga #8 (Marvel, No. 163)
7. Spider-Man: The Manga #9 (Marvel, No. 167)
8. Drakuun: Shadow of the Warlock #1 (D.H., No. 182)
9. Battle Angel Alita Part Eight #9 (Viz, No. 192)
10. Inu Yasha: A Feudal Fairy Tale #11 (Viz, No. 195)

TOP 10 $3.95 & UP BOOKS

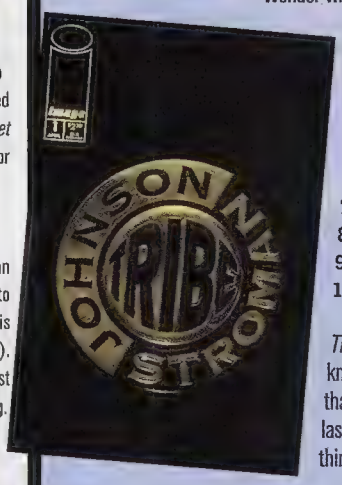
1. Thrillkillers '62, $4.95 (DC, No. 63)
2. Starman Secret Files, $4.95 (DC, No. 84)
3. The X-Files Season One: Ice, $4.95 (Topps, No. 114)
4. Martha Washington Saves the World #3, $3.95 (D.H., No. 120)
5. X-Men/Alpha Flight: The Gift, $3.99 (Marvel, No. 148)
6. Oh My Goddess!: Ninja Master #2, $3.95 (D.H., No. 156)
7. Vertigo Vérité: Hell Eternal, $6.95 (Vertigo/DC, No. 161)
8. The Darkness Collected Edition #4, $4.95 (T.C./Image, No. 166)
9. Elfquest #21, $4.95 (WaRP Graphics, No. 171)
10. Red Rocket 7 #6, $3.95 (Dark Horse, No. 178)

TOP 10 COLOR BOOKS

1. JLA: Year One (DC, No. 14)
2. Divine Right: The Adv's. of M. Faraday #5 (WildStorm/Image, No. 24)
3. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #90 (Marvel, No. 25)
4. KISS: The Psycho Circus #7 (McFarlane/Image, No. 27)
5. Superman: The Man of Steel #78 (DC, No. 34)
6. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #73 (DC, No. 42)
7. Batman: Blackgate—Isle of Men #1 (DC, No. 49)
8. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #105 (DC, No. 50)
9. Batman: Bane of the Demon #2 (DC, No. 52)
10. Star Wars: Crimson Empire #3 (D.H., No. 55)

LOOKING BACK

Wonder what was topping the charts **FIVE YEARS AGO**? Here you go!



1. Uncanny X-Men #300 (Marvel)
2. Spawn #11 (Image)
3. The Maxx #1 (Image)
4. Youngblood: Strikefile #1 (Image)
5. Cable (series) #1 (Marvel)
6. Spider-Man Unlimited #1 (Marvel)
7. Magnus: Robot Fighter #25 (Valiant)
8. StormWatch (vol. 1) #2 (Image)
9. Tribe #1 (Image)
10. Spectacular Spider-Man #200 (Marvel)

Tribe? What the hell is a *Tribe*? Well, if ya really wanna know, *Tribe* was some kinda boxing-themed (we think) title that was supposed to be an ongoing series and wound up lasting three issues. But it came out at a time when everything Image sold a kajillion copies. Today? It's landfill at best.

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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Good morning! This month, as always, we'll be quizzing you on your comic knowledge and grading your score against the absurd. This time around, we'll match your score to famous comic characters and their favorite breakfast cereals. The higher your score, the...well, the higher your score.

SCORE	RANK
0-4	*Mr. Mxyzptlk and Müeslix. Mxy knows his umlauts.*
5-9	*Kaboom and* Kaboom. *The cereal's off the market. How long till the comic joins it?*
10-14	*Witchblade and Porn Cops...ah...we mean Corn Pops.*
15	*Alpha Flight's Northstar and Cap'n Crunch. He just digs sailors.*

1 What horrible fate befell the new hero Retro in *JLA*?
A) He was killed on his first official League mission by Dr. Polaris.
B) He tried out for the League, but was turned away.
C) He was murdered by the villain Prometheus.
D) convoluted storylines

2 Who killed Brian Banner, the abusive bastich father of milksop Bruce Banner?
A) General Thunderbolt Ross
B) Major Glenn Talbot
C) Doc Leonard Samson
D) Milksop Bruce Banner

3 Where did the WildC.A.T.s' Voodoo work as a stripper?
A) the Voodoo Lounge
B) the Midnight Lounge
C) the King of Diamonds Lounge
D) the *Wizard* offices (mmm...fictional babes)

4 Who'd Lex Luthor name his daughter, Lena, after?
A) his mom
B) Lex's female twin, who died at birth
C) Lex's first love, whom he had met in an abuse-filled foster home
D) More characters in the Superman mythos with the initials "LL"?!? Lex Luthor, Lois Lane, Lucy Lane, Lana Lang, Lori Lemaris and now, "Lena Luthor." Ugh. Shoot us now.

5 What did the Flash give Neron in exchange for his assistance in stopping the Rogues Gallery?
A) his love of Linda Park
B) his soul
C) the memory of his past
D) His bootlegged copy of the "Fantastic Four" movie. Yeesh, and you thought Neron was evil!

6 What's the name of Quantum and Woody's goat?
A) Slick Billy
B) Space Goat
C) Vincent Van Goat
D) ...who cares? We just wanna know what Jim Shooter's blood pressure is like when he reads Acclaim books starring goats.

7 Robin's gal pal, the Spoiler, is the daughter of which super-loser supervillain?
A) Cluemaster
B) Clock King
C) Mirror Master
D) Pied Piper (ummmm...no, probably not the Pied Piper)

8 When the Absorbing Man and Titania went after the bounty on Spider-Man's head, what new codenames did they use?
A) the Steel Stallion and Knock-Out
B) Lightning Bolt and Thunder Girl
C) Mega and Supra
D) B. Brian Blair and "Jumping" Jim Brunzel...The Killer Bees!!!

9 What in God's name do the initials "S.O.S." stand for in the name of the Savage Dragon's new superteam?
A) Special Operations Strikeforce
B) Superpowered Operatives Striketeam
C) Security Operations Squad
D) Skinless Overcooked Sausages

10 What was Daredevil's professional-boxer dad's nickname in the ring?
A) "Mauler Jack" Murdock
B) "Mad Jack" Murdock
C) "Battling Jack" Murdock
D) "Loose-Boweled Jack" Murdock

11 Who was Angela before she became an angel?
A) a redemption-seeking Hellspawn known as Mangela
B) She was five separate women whose souls merged after their deaths.
C) a lawyer destined for Hell
D) a hooker with a heart of gold (and an oozing sore)

12 What was unique about that goody-two-shoes Green Lantern, Mogo?
A) He was a living planet, kinda like that crater-faced Ego.
B) He had two heads with two different personalities, one good and one evil.
C) He was a swarm of alien insects that came together as one sentient entity.
D) The voice of that Claudia chick from "Party of Five" *doesn't* bother him. Weird.

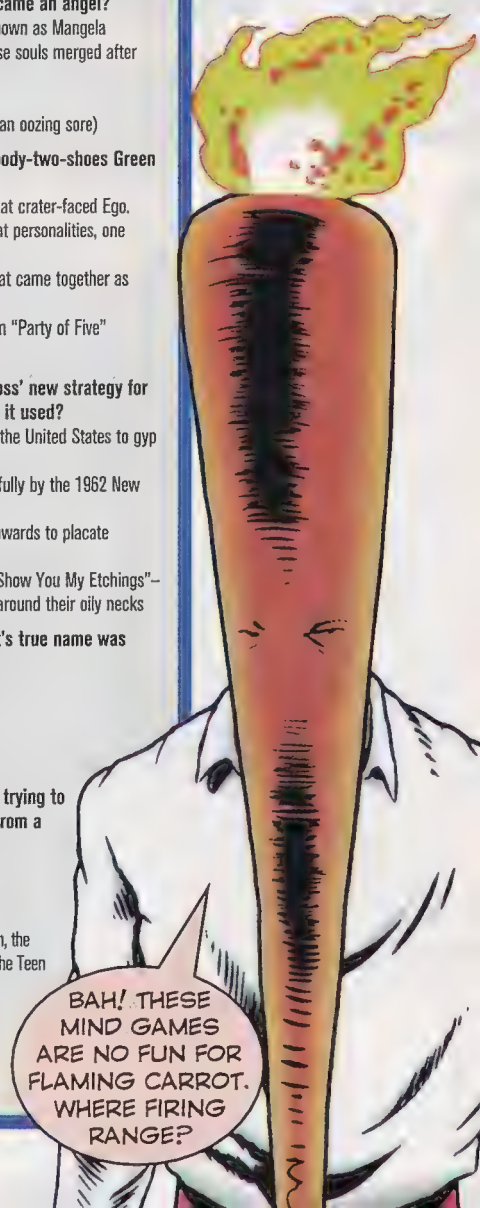
13 What is General Thunderbolt Ross' new strategy for dealing with the Hulk, and when was it used?
A) the old "Bait and Switch"–used by the United States to gyp the Indians from their lands
B) the "Hit and Run"–used unsuccessfully by the 1962 New York Mets
C) appeasement–used by European cowards to placate dictator Adolf Hitler in the 1930s
D) the "Come Up to My Place and I'll Show You My Etchings"–used by guys with lots of gold chains around their oily necks

14 Neophyte X-Men punk Maggott's true name was recently revealed to be:
A) Japheth.
B) Isaiah.
C) Abu Nidal.
D) Dave.

15 Which Teen Titan recently died trying to save the team's mentor Mr. Jupiter from a blazing inferno of um...fire?
A) Argent
B) Risk
C) Joto
D) ...why aren't Superboy, Impulse, Robin, the female Captain Marvel and a new Batgirl the Teen Titans? "Argent"? "Risk"? Who are these losers? And now they're bringing the old Titans back into the book?!? They're not teens anymore! Arghhhhhhhhh!!! This is soooooooo stupid!

ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on page 207 if this is too tough...



BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

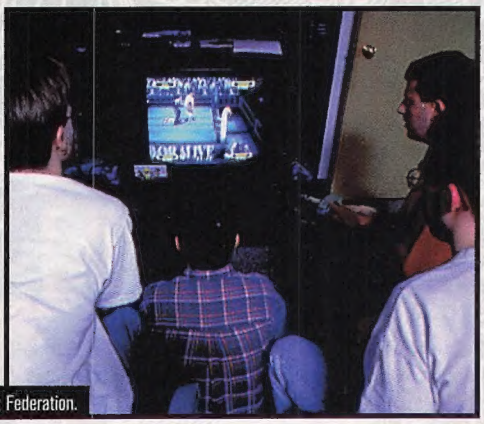
Snap into a Slim Jim!!

Masks, midgets and mayhem!

Professional wrestling, long a mainstay in the cultural diet of Wizard Entertainment, has reached a frenzied peak thanks to the most wondrous device ever created by man: the Nintendo64. With the N64's new *WCW vs. NWO* wrestling game (Free plug: the BEST fighting game ever made!), over two dozen members of the often shirtless and sweaty *Wizard* Bullpen now meet every Monday night to battle it out in the "squared circle."

So who are the kings of the ring? Current heavyweight champ Accounting Clerk Mike "Hollywood Hogan" Fasolo remains undefeated, while the tag-team gold is held by masked *Wizard* editors Brian "Ultimo Dragon" Cunningham and Andrew "*Rey Mysterio* Jr." Kardon (Though, for reasons that even he can't explain, Andrew has dubbed his wrestler "*El Bobo Rey*." We're thinkin' that mask is just too tight.).

Now as long as Wizard Corporate doesn't institute random drug-testing, we're home free!



W.W.F. The *Wizard* Wrestling Federation.

TOP 10 ways the Winter Olympics woulda been different if comic characters competed

10 Jerkweed Latverian judge in iron mask seems to give 0.0 scores to everyone!
9 The Scarlet Skier and the Black Racer fail to capture any medals in the men's downhill slalom, go berserk and condemn mankind to extinction (HUGE ratings that night).
8 Brother Voodoo's Jamaican bobsled team loses, but wins the hearts of people everywhere and becomes the subject of a Disney flick called "Voodoo Runnings," starring the zombiefied corpse of John Candy.
7 Mr. Freeze banned by Olympic Committee for testing positive for both steroids and Prestone.
6 Brother Power the Geek, unable to find a luge partner, kills and eats half the Olympic audience in his rage.
5 Snapper Carr competes in the slalom and doesn't really do that well, but considers it a good experience nonetheless.
4 Picabo Street sends G.W. Bridge home in tears when she tells him, "Your name is, like, dumb."
3 Batroc the Leaper wins France a gold medal in hockey, but is later disqualified for wearing a Jerry Lewis T-shirt to the medal ceremony.
2 Batman hits the ice and–*Voilà!*–skates pop out of his boots!
1 Tonya Harding tries to kneecap Nancy Kerrigan again, but Kerrigan's new bodyguard–Frank Castle–pops a cap in her white-trash ass!

CBIQ answers...

1. C 4. C 7. A 10. C 13. C
2. D 5. A 8. B 11. B 14. A
3. B 6. C 9. A 12. A 15. C

ONE OF THE DAMNED

DOING HARD TIME

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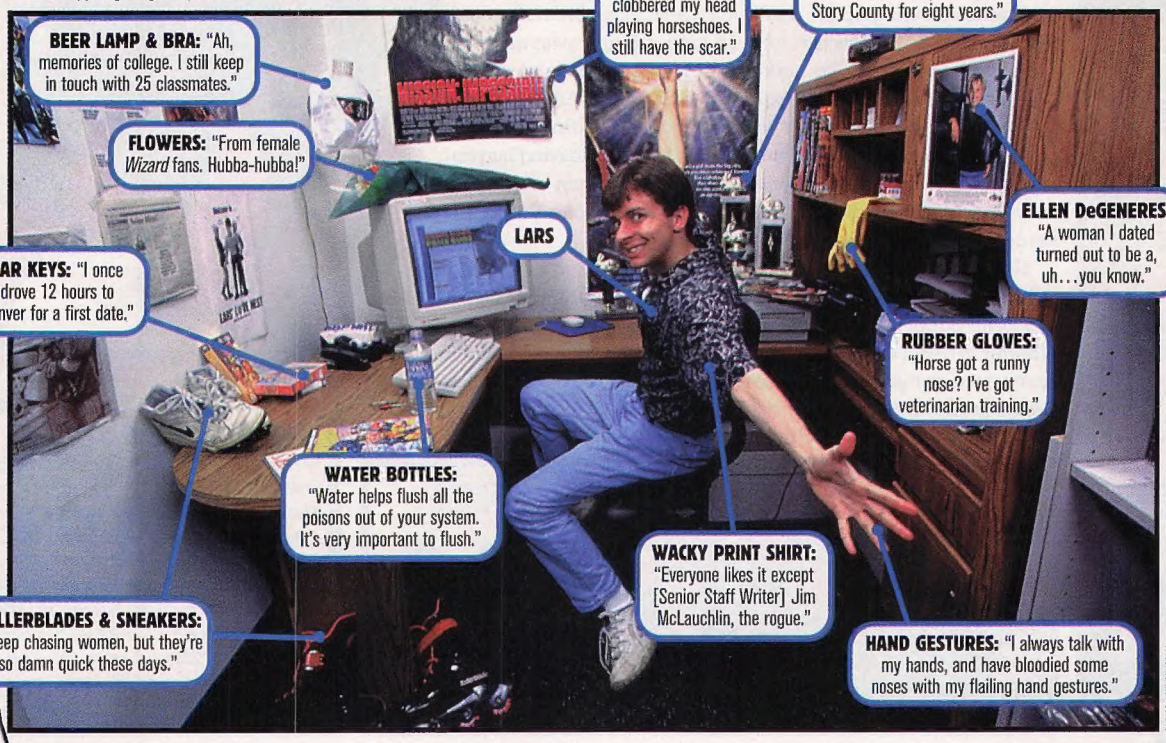
WHY WE PAY HIM: "I edit and traffic everything Price Guide-related, monitoring data on industry-related trends. Basically, I follow anything dealing with money and comics. And I'm paid to be the sex symbol of *Wizard*."

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE: "It's drooping more and more every day since I stopped gelling it." (In reference to his new stylin' haircut.)

MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT: "Getting a chest massage from a woman dressed as the Black Cat."



PHOTOS: PAUL SCHERALDI

 by PETER SANDERSON

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Marv Wolfman and George Pérez redesigned the DC Universe in 'Crisis on Infinite Earths' 13 years ago

DC Comics was in serious trouble. In a time when Marvel Comics ruled fandom, DC was fighting a losing battle in 1985—and it only had itself to blame.

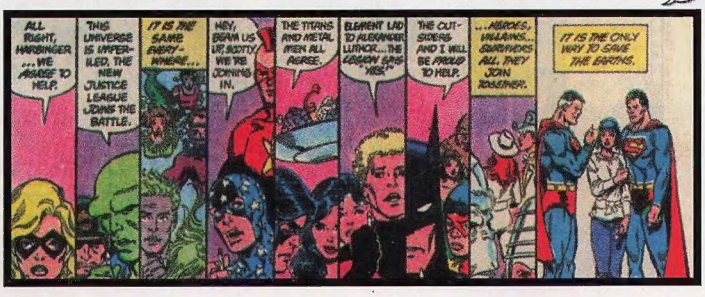
For new fans, DC's books were nightmarish to jump into, mostly because their continuity was so confusing. There wasn't just one DC Universe of characters, there was a *multiverse*. DC's modern heroes lived on Earth-1, while its various Golden Age heroes of the 1940s existed in another dimension on a parallel world called Earth-2. Lex Luthor was the only superhero on Earth-3. There was Earth-X, Earth-Prime and so on, and readers needed a scorecard just to keep up. Something had to give...and soon.

"DC was not being read," recalls DC writer/editor Marv Wolfman. "It was crucial to tell people that DC could be fun again. It's like the saying you have to hit the mule over the head with a two-by-four to get his attention. *Crisis on Infinite Earths* was the two-by-four."

Written by Wolfman and penciled by George Pérez, the 12-issue *Crisis on Infinite Earths* kicked off in April 1985 and marked the beginning of DC's creative and commercial resurgence. A mega company-wide crossover, *Crisis* planned to wipe out DC's then-current continuity and start fresh. It all began with an insanely powerful villain named the Anti-Monitor, whose only wish was to destroy the multiverse. Superheroes from all the parallel Earths joined forces to take him down, and countless heroes, villains and worlds were obliterated in the process. Eventually, the Anti-Monitor was defeated and DC's history was revamped. No more parallel worlds. No more Earth-2 superhero counterparts. Just one Earth. One universe. And, according to *Crisis*, it had always been that way, retroactively.

Besides clearing up the confusion, *Crisis* also killed off some long-running DC characters who no longer fit the taste of modern comics readers. To make Superman the sole surviving Kryptonian, the original Supergirl had to die. Barry Allen (a.k.a. the Flash) with his sunny, straight-laced personality, didn't fit the new period of "grim and gritty" comics, and he too died, leaving his protegé Wally West to take over the mantle. Wolfman originally intended for *Crisis* to jump-start the continuity of all of DC's heroes, but his idea was overruled.

Nonetheless, *Crisis* (which will soon be collected in a hardcover edition), served notice that from now on everything at DC could be different. Superman and Batman were revamped in 1986, along with Wonder Woman a year later. In 1994, DC further tinkered with its continuity through the mini-series *Zero Hour*, with mixed results. Either way, *Crisis* served to revive DC's struggling titles and a company that had just turned 50 years old, found a way to be young again.



DATELINE

APRIL 1985

Material boys and girls alike flocked to theaters for Madonna's *"Desperately Seeking Susan."*...TV viewers spent Wednesday nights wondering who'd cheat on whom next on ABC's *"Dynasty."*...Music lovers everywhere joined forces to fight hunger as *"We are the World"* ruled *Billboard*'s music charts....In a "classic" move, the *Coca-Cola Co.* announced it's changing the formula of Coke.

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TRYING TO DETERMINE IF THEY WERE SEPARATED AT BIRTH, OR IF IT WAS JUST MERELY DESTINY, OUR PEACH FRIEND SETS SAIL TO FIND HIS SOULMATE STRAWBERRY QUENCHING HIS THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE, MAKING LIFE BETTER.

WE JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE HAVING FUN AND HOPEFULLY WE MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD.

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